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CONTENTS

Chapter		Page
I.	ORGANIZATIONAL MATTERS	3
II.	UNFPA: COUNTRY PROGRAMMES AND RELATED MATTERS	12
III.	UNFPA: FINANCIAL, BUDGETARY AND ADMINISTRATIVE MATTERS	24
IV.	UNFPA: COORDINATION IN HEALTH POLICY AND PROGRAMMING	28
V.	HARMONIZATION OF PRESENTATION OF BUDGETS	30
VI.	COUNTRY COOPERATION FRAMEWORKS AND RELATED MATTERS	36
VII.	FINANCIAL, BUDGETARY AND ADMINISTRATIVE MATTERS	48
VIII.	UNITED NATIONS DEVELOPMENT FUND FOR WOMEN	55
IX.	OTHER MATTERS	59

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CONTENTS (continued)

Decisions adopted

Number		Page
97/1.	UNFPA/UNICEF/WHO Coordinating Committee on Health	29
97/2.	UNFPA: Audit reports	27
97/3.	UNDP: Audit reports	50
97/4.	United Nations Development Fund for Women	57
97/5.	First global cooperation framework	39
97/6.	Overview of decisions adopted by the Executive Board at its first regular session 1997	67

I. ORGANIZATIONAL MATTERS

Introduction

1. The Vice President of the Executive Board for 1996, Ms. Cecilia Rebong (Philippines), on behalf of the President, H. E. Mrs. Annette des Iles (Trinidad and Tobago), opened the first regular session 1997. She extended, on behalf of all Bureau members, special thanks to the many delegations and staff members of the secretariat for having made possible the successes and achievements of the Board in 1996. She then elaborated on a number of decisions taken by the Board during 1996. In addition, she noted that the number of informal Board meetings that took place in 1996 attested to the efforts by the Board and Secretariat to enhance awareness of critical development issues among policy makers and the public.

2. The Bureau had met on 7 November, 17 December, and 13 January. At those meetings, it reviewed the working methods of the Executive Board, discussed the preparation of the work plan for 1997, considered the presentation aspects and approval processes of the UNDP country cooperation frameworks and UNFPA country programmes, and agreed on the countries and dates of the first field visit to be undertaken in 1997.

3. In closing, the Vice-President thanked the members of the Bureau and, on their behalf, expressed their gratitude for the support and trust received from the Executive Board in 1996.

Election of the Bureau

4. The Executive Board elected the following Bureau for 1997:

President: Mr. Hans Lundborg (Sweden)

Vice-President: Mr. Bruce Lutangu Namakando (Zambia)

Vice-President: Mr. Mochamed Slamet Hidayat (Indonesia)

Vice-President: Mr. Sorin Mihail Tanasescu (Romania)

Vice-President: H. E. Mr. John William Ashe (Antigua and Barbuda)

5. The President, Mr. Hans Lundborg (Sweden), thanked the outgoing President and Vice-Presidents for 1996. He looked forward to working with all Executive Board members and the secretariat in ensuring that the work of the Board was as fruitful and efficient as possible. He hoped to continue the well-established tradition of efficiency in the Board, beginning its meetings on time, ensuring focused discussion and concise statements, and reaching for consensus in an open and transparent manner. He underlined the need to follow up in 1997 on the decisions adopted by the Board in the previous years. It was necessary to remain actively involved in and contribute to the process of reform. He also cited the importance of the change management process. The follow-up to General Assembly resolution 50/227 was highlighted, particularly with reference to the funding arrangements for UNDP and UNFPA. He hoped that improved documentation

would lead to improved discussions. He would do his utmost to help to facilitate the work of the Board, in close collaboration with other members of the Bureau, the cooperation of all members and observers, and the support of the secretariat. He conveyed the Board's sincere congratulations to the Vice-Presidents on their election. He looked forward to working together on a team that would reflect the views and positions of different countries.

6. The Associate Administrator thanked the outgoing Bureau and congratulated the newly elected Bureau on behalf of the staff of UNDP, UNFPA, and the United Nations Office for Project Services (UNOPS).

Agenda

7. The Secretary informed the Executive Board that all documents, except for DP/1997/2 on the harmonization of presentation of budgets and accounts, had been submitted to the United Nations Office of Conference and Support Services (UNOCSS) on schedule. She noted that an informal note on the response to the external evaluation of the United Nations Development Fund for Women (UNIFEM) had been distributed as requested at the pre-session informal meeting.

8. The Executive Board approved the following agenda for its first regular session, as contained in document DP/1997/L.1:

Item 1. Organizational matters

UNFPA segment

Item 2. UNFPA: Country programmes and related matters

Item 3. UNFPA: Financial, budgetary and administrative matters

Item 4. UNFPA: Coordination in health policy and programming

UNDP/UNFPA joint segment

Item 5. Harmonization of presentation of budgets

UNDP segment

Item 6. Country cooperation frameworks and related matters

Item 7. Financial, budgetary and administrative matters

Item 8. United Nations Development Fund for Women

Item 9. Other matters

9. The Executive Board approved the work plan, contained in document DP/1996/L.1, as orally amended.

10. The Executive Board approved the report of the third regular session 1996 (DP/1996/39).

Matters relating to the rules of procedure, documentation and the functioning of the Executive Board

Rules of procedure

11. The Chairperson of the ad hoc open-ended working group on the rules of procedure, Ms. Cecilia Rebong (Philippines), presented document DP/1997/CRP.1, which contained a progress report by the President of the Executive Board for 1996 on the work of the ad hoc open-ended working group on rules of procedure established by decision 96/25. She noted that the working group intended to finish its work in time for the draft rules of procedure to be presented at the annual session 1997 for adoption.

12. One delegation stated that it wished to express its views in writing on the second draft text of the rules of procedure as it had not been able to attend the meeting of the working group in December. The President agreed to that request.

13. The Executive Board was informed that the Bureau had requested Ms. Rebong to continue as chairperson of the ad hoc open-ended working group on rules of procedure.

14. The Executive Board took note of the progress report by the President on the work of the ad hoc open-ended working group on rules of procedure.

Documentation

15. With regard to implementation of Executive Board decision 96/45 on documentation, the Secretary informed the Executive Board that the provisions of the decision had been complied with almost completely. Only one document for the present session had not been submitted 10 weeks in advance of the session. However, delays had been experienced in issuance of documents in official languages owing to the heavy UNOCSS workload during the General Assembly period. Advance copies of documentation and conference room papers would now be posted on the UNDP home page, accessible to all Permanent Missions to the United Nations. She noted that UNDP and the United Nations utilized different software programmes. Discussions with UNOCSS were ongoing. Documentation for future sessions would be posted on the Internet. Requests for conference room papers might have to be more limited as the increasing use of those papers in lieu of official documents was of growing concern. The Secretary informed the Board that an informal consultation would be held on the annual report of the Administrator.

16. The Chief of the Central Planning and Coordination Service, Office of the Director of Conference Services, made a statement to the Executive Board on the electronic dissemination of documents. The basic strategy of the United Nations Secretariat was to utilize the Internet in order to provide access to the optical disk system of the United Nations. The optical disk system was a repository of the final, official versions of all parliamentary documents issued

by the United Nations in New York and in Geneva, including the documents of the UNDP/UNFPA Executive Board. All such documents were available on the optical disk in all languages simultaneously, as soon as they were released in hard copy.

17. Accessibility of documents through the United Nations website was accepted as the preferred means of dissemination by the General Assembly in resolution 51/211 C. By the end of December 1996, over 125 missions in New York had e-mail and Internet services provided through UNDP. In addition, 115 passwords had been issued to users of the optical disk from 57 missions in New York, and 54 passwords had been issued to users accessing the optical disk from government offices located in 18 different countries. Training on information retrieval and downloading from the system was provided by the United Nations at the Dag Hammarskjöld Library.

18. Several delegations expressed appreciation for the oral reports, underlining that real progress had been made in the dissemination of documentation during 1996. The secretariat was complying with Executive Board decision 95/45. One delegation noted that the Executive Director of the United Nations Children's Fund had declared a 15-page limit on the annual report of the Executive Director, a restriction it was hoped UNDP and UNFPA would also follow. Another delegation requested that conference room papers, which were not available on the optical disk system, be made available electronically through the UNDP website. One speaker stated that a very small percentage of the official documentation had been made available to his capital in its official language. He requested information on the possibility of distribution through the Internet to his country's capital and noted that UNICEF sent documentation by express mail in the requested official language to his country's capital 15 days in advance of its Executive Board session. Another speaker was concerned that the optical disk system could be too costly for all missions to the United Nations and capitals to obtain.

19. The Chief of the Central Planning and Coordination Service explained that there were different levels of access through Internet. Documents were filed electronically on the optical disk system at the same time they were distributed in hard copy. As of November 1996, the hard copy could be retrieved electronically since the optical disk system and Internet had been linked. He noted that a facility for electronic distribution of documents was available in the capital of the country whose representative had stated he had not received all of the documentation in time for the session.

Work plan of the Executive Board for 1997

20. The Secretary of the Executive Board introduced the draft work plan of the Executive Board for 1997 (DP/1997/CRP.2), explaining that comments made at the third regular session 1996 on the outline of UNDP and UNFPA issues for 1997 had been taken into account in the proposed work plan. Changes resulting from the pre-session informal meeting held on 17 December 1996 were read orally as follows: (a) in table 2, the item on rules of procedure should be removed and placed in table 3, for consideration at the annual session 1997; (b) in table 3, the report of the Executive Director would also include a section on resources; (c) on page 8, the word "New" should be replaced with "Special" with reference

to the Special Initiative on Africa; (d) the main programme records of the annual report of the Administrator would include reports on funds under UNDP administration. The Secretary noted that each year at the Board's second regular session, one fund would be selected for in-depth examination, on a rotating basis. Reporting on that fund would not be repeated in the annual report of the Administrator. In 1997, the United Nations Capital Development Fund (UNCDF) would be considered at the second regular session.

21. The Secretary noted the proposal that country cooperation frameworks (CCFs) of UNDP be taken up at the annual session 1997, on an exceptional basis. She also informed the Executive Board that the third regular session would be reduced to five days (table 4). That reduction would result in the allocation of one and a half days devoted to UNFPA financial and budgetary matters and one half day for consideration of UNDP CCFs. The item on field visits could be taken up in an informal meeting. The item on the round-table process could be postponed to 1998.

22. Several delegations commented on the draft work plan for 1997. One delegation requested more specificity in the themes for the annual and regular sessions and also suggested that UNDP and UNFPA items be clustered whenever possible, including through joint discussions of CCFs and country programmes. A list of CCFs and country programmes to be considered in 1997 was requested. It was suggested that the work plan be flexible in order to accommodate new developments.

23. Another delegation underlined the importance of including strategy and policy planning at each session, and suggested that the following areas could be highlighted at different sessions: country programming, evaluation of impact and effectiveness of UNDP programmes, public information, and resource mobilization. The synergy between the latter two areas was emphasized in view of its importance to the work of UNDP and with regard to its relationship to the public and to legislators. That delegation also suggested that the Executive Board have five standing committees to draft strategic papers for consideration by the Board.

24. One delegation requested that the strategic and business plans of UNCDF and the United Nations Volunteer Programme be considered in 1997. The Secretary confirmed that the UNCDF plans would be taken up at the second regular session 1997.

25. The President noted that the issues paper on the work plan for 1997 presented at the third regular session 1996 should be considered in relation to the draft work plan, as it contained the rationale and background for the items to be considered by the Executive Board in 1997.

26. One delegation, supported by another, proposed that the second regular session 1997 be reduced to three days and scheduled during the same week as the second regular session of the UNICEF Executive Board, which would be held for two days. Another delegation expressed the view that the Board needed the full week during the second regular session owing to its heavy workload.

27. One speaker sought clarification on documentation on accountability for the second regular session and suggested that in future years the joint UNDP/UNFPA item on reports to the Economic and Social Council be taken up at the second regular session. A separate report on the assistance to the Palestinian people was also requested. It was requested that official documentation on the round-table process be provided when that item was considered in 1998.

28. One delegation expressed concern that the conference room paper on national execution would not be comprehensive enough, with sufficient relevant examples from the field, and thus requested that discussion of that item be postponed if programme countries had not been consulted. Another speaker requested that UNDP comply with the recommendations regarding national execution contained in the report of the Secretary-General on the implementation of the recommendations of the Board of Auditors (A/51/488/Add.2) with regard to national execution. An update on the development of general standards for national execution was requested.

29. Several requests for additional items were made, including on the Reserve for Field Accommodation (RFA) and one on interregional cooperation, both at the annual session. One delegation requested that the Administrator give the Executive Board an update on relevant developments, including strategic evaluations, at each session under the item on organizational matters.

30. Two delegations requested official documentation for the items on national execution and the general budget strategy at the second regular session, rather than conference room papers. The Secretary noted that the deadline for the submission of documents for the second regular session had already passed.

31. One delegation, also on behalf of another, in noting the presentation of the comprehensive evaluation of UNFPA in 1998 and the summary of evaluation findings in 1997, requested that information be provided that related financial expenditures to outcomes and that the Executive Board be informed on how the results and lessons learned of those evaluations would be fed back into UNFPA programmes. The same delegation also queried whether the report on the future country programming process of UNFPA requested in Executive Board decision 96/13 was included in the work plan 1997. Another delegation queried whether UNFPA would present a strategy for its 1998-1999 budget at the second regular session.

32. The Secretary informed the Executive Board that there would be reports on accountability at the second regular session as well as within the annual report of the Administrator at the annual session. She stated that the conference room paper on national execution was based on the evaluation of that modality, which had been undertaken in consultation with programme countries. The annual report of the Administrator would include a section on interregional cooperation. She noted that the Administrator and Executive Director did indeed report at each session on developments since the previous session. The request for more substantive reporting was noted and would be reflected in the future.

33. The Deputy Executive Director (Policy and Administration) informed the Executive Board that it would not be technically possible for UNFPA to present its budget strategy at the second regular session. The Fund planned to convene

an informal session with Executive Board members when the strategy was finalized.

34. The Chief, Executive Board Branch, UNFPA, noted that the discussion on the process of consideration of UNFPA country programmes, which had been noted in the issues paper (DP/1996/13) on the work plan 1997, would be taken up under the item "country programmes and related matters". With regard to the query on evaluations, he stated that UNFPA would provide feedback on lessons learned and on progress in relating expenditures to outcomes, as much as possible in the summary on evaluation in the 1997 annual report of the Executive Director and in more detail in 1998.

35. The Executive Board approved the work plan 1997 as orally amended and annexed to decision 97/6.

36. A revised work plan, contained in document DP/1997/L.5, was distributed to the Executive Board.

37. One delegation, also on behalf of another, stated that it would support a shortened second regular session in 1998 and future years. Another delegation commented that it would propose that the work plan for 1998 concentrate on strategic issues and avoid micro-management. The same delegation also asked that notice be given one month ahead of each session regarding the CCFs for which a written request had been received that they be discussed.

Future sessions

38. The Executive Board agreed to the following schedule of future sessions of the Executive Board in 1997 subject to the approval of the Committee on Conferences:

Second regular session 1997: 10-14 March 1997

Annual session 1997: 12-23 May 1997 (New York)

Third regular session 1997: 15-19 September 1997

39. The Executive Board agreed to the following tentative schedule of future sessions of the Executive Board in 1998:

First regular session 1998: 19-23 January 1998

Second regular session 1998: 20-24 April 1998

Annual session 1998 (Geneva): 25 May-5 June 1998

Third regular session 1998: 7-11 September 1998

40. The Executive Board agreed to the subjects to be discussed at the second regular session 1997 as listed in table 2 of the annex to decision 97/6.

41. The Executive Board approved decision 97/6, an overview of decisions adopted by the Executive Board at its first regular session 1997.

42. The Administrator extended his gratitude to the Executive Board for a productive session, which had been characterized by difficult discussions on some issues. He noted that the period ahead would be demanding and looked forward to working with the Board in the year ahead.

43. The Deputy Director, Policy and Administration, UNFPA, on behalf of the Executive Director, thanked the Bureau for its leadership and the Executive Board for its guidance and advice during the session.

44. The President thanked all participants, the secretariats of UNDP and UNFPA, the interpreters, and the conference officers and assistants for a successful session. The Bureau would meet frequently and ensure follow-up to the decisions of the Executive Board.

UNFPA SEGMENT

45. The Executive Director brought the Executive Board up to date on some of the developments at UNFPA since the last Board meeting. She informed the Board that a record number of new country programmes would be proposed at the first and second regular sessions 1997. Half of the programmes would be for sub-Saharan Africa, which continued to be a priority region for the Fund, as it was for the entire United Nations system through the United Nations System-wide Special Initiative on Africa, in which UNFPA was an active participant. The Fund continued its efforts on initiatives of special significance to the continent, including combating female genital mutilation, which was the subject of an expert consultation that took place in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, in March 1996.

46. The Executive Director enumerated some of the areas in which the Fund was actively cooperating with other United Nations agencies and non-governmental organizations (NGOs) such as reproductive and sexual rights, reproductive health in emergency and conflict situations, youth concerns and the effective integration of gender dimensions in population programmes. In November 1996, for example, UNFPA signed an agreement with the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies and the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees to address the reproductive health needs of refugees in the Great Lakes region of central Africa. Recent activities designed for young people included the UNFPA-sponsored International Youth Essay Contest on promoting responsible reproductive health behaviour. A technical consultation focusing on adolescent reproductive health, including a discussion of female genital mutilation, was scheduled for January 1997.

47. Within the United Nations system, UNFPA continued to play a lead role in implementing the Programme of Action of the International Conference on Population and Development (ICPD). Internally, the Executive Director had initiated a management review of the Fund's operations, with the assistance of the British Overseas Development Administration (ODA). The review was focusing on streamlining and revising internal policies and procedures guidelines,

reorienting staff training, improving the management of field offices and strengthening oversight, monitoring and evaluation processes.

48. The Executive Director reported on the resource situation, noting that the total general income for 1996 would be approximately $309 million, about $3 million less than the previous year. The decline was largely the result of the reduction in the contribution of one major donor. However, other donors had increased their contributions, thereby making the decline less pronounced than it could have been. Multi-bilateral financial support had reached $16.7 million, the highest level ever. The Executive Director also followed up on the note verbale that she had sent to members of the Executive Board, announcing that the Fund had reached an agreement valued at $35 million with the European Union to provide multi-bilateral assistance for several countries in Asia. She also reported that she had authorized a drawdown in the Fund's operational reserve at the end of 1996 because of the late receipt of monetary commitments from a few of the major donors and the need to meet financial commitments already made for programme activities. That situation emphasized the need for regular payment schedules of donor contributions.

49. Delegations welcomed the Executive Director's statement. Several particularly welcomed the emphasis she had given to the Fund's activities in Africa and on working with NGOs. One delegation noted favourably that the gender dimension was receiving such attention at the Fund and wondered whether the Executive Director would be prepared to offer "best practices" in that area. The same delegation also asked about the current level of the operational reserve. Another delegation welcomed the Fund's participation at the International Youth Forum in Vienna. The same delegation also requested that data concerning such gender issues as women's access to resources be included more frequently in UNFPA publications. One delegation requested that more information on the management review process and on the strengthening of country offices be provided to the Executive Board either at an informal session or during the annual session. One delegation regretted the decline in the volume of contributions to core resources and called on countries to try to increase the level of their contributions, in line with the commitments made at the ICPD. In that regard, another delegation wondered whether the number of country programmes was not stretching the resources of the Fund too thinly.

50. The Executive Director responded that it was too early to come forward with "best practices" concerning gender, but she could enumerate some of the things being done: seeing that data were disaggregated by gender throughout the United Nations system, involving both women and men in programme design and management, retraining all UNFPA staff on gender issues, and making sure that gender advisers on the Fund's country support teams worked with UNIFEM so that there could be cross-fertilization between agencies. She noted that the Inter-Agency Task Force on Basic Social Services for All, which she chaired, would be coming up with "best practices" in all the areas in which it was working, including gender.

51. The Executive Director said that NGOs had not been involved in the implementation of UNFPA programmes as much as was optimal but that progress was being made. Often that meant working with Governments to help them appreciate the value that NGOs could have, especially in reaching certain segments of a

society, such as women and young people. It was also necessary to carry out training at the NGOs themselves in order to increase their capacities for implementation and management of activities. And, it meant building upon the Fund's already improving accreditation process so that it had greater ability to choose appropriate NGOs with which to work. In that regard, the Board should note that the new multi-bilateral cooperation in Asia agreed to with the European Union was earmarked for work with NGOs.

52. The Executive Director was pleased that the Executive Board was so positive about the continuing efforts of the Fund to give more emphasis to Africa. She noted that the amount of resources being devoted to programmes in Africa had increased greatly: from expenditures of $36 million in 1993 to allocations of $103 million in 1996. She also noted that one of the chief objects of the internal management review process was to push for greater decentralization of operations to the field, not just in terms of financial responsibility but management and policy responsibility as well. She said that she would be pleased to discuss the management review process in greater depth at a later time in another forum. In answer to the question about stretching the Fund's resources, she noted that it was the Fund's programme formulation process, which mobilized a lot of human resources both in the field and at headquarters, that was being stretched, not the financial resources for programme implementation. The Fund was already implementing programmes in some 120 countries around the world, and all of those programmes had already had resources allocated to them depending on the overall volume of resources available to the Fund. She informed delegations that the Fund was receiving that week the remainder of the delayed contributions, which meant that the operational reserve would be restored to its authorized amount of $63 million.

II. UNFPA: COUNTRY PROGRAMMES AND RELATED MATTERS

53. The President suggested to delegations that, as proposed at the Executive Board's pre-session informal meeting, the Board take advantage of the presence of three UNFPA representatives to engage in an informal discussion on the Fund's programmes in those three countries. There being no objection, the Board adjourned into an informal session to hear from and ask questions of the UNFPA representatives for Côte d'Ivoire, Malawi and Mexico.

Overview

54. Upon resumption of the session, the Deputy Executive Director (Programme) introduced the UNFPA country programmes that were being proposed to the Executive Board. She outlined the programming process at UNFPA and reported that a total of 34 country programmes were being presented to the Board at its first and second regular sessions 1997. The unusually large number had put a strain on the Fund's human resources, but she felt sure that the results justified the expenditure of effort. She reported that with the assistance of the British ODA, UNFPA was to begin staff training on logical framework techniques and those techniques should be reflected in future country programmes beginning with the third regular session 1997. She informed the Board that the country programmes for Algeria, Brazil, Egypt and Yemen were being extended for one year and that of Bhutan for six months, to the end of 1997, in order to

complete programme activities but that no additional financial resources were required. She asked for the Board's guidance on how the Fund could best meet the requirements of decision 96/13, which called on UNFPA to align its country programme approval process with those of UNDP and the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF), in time for a decision at the annual session 1997.

55. In introducing the 10 country programmes being presented to the first regular session 1997, the Deputy Executive Director (Programme) referred to some of the main themes that animated the proposals being made for the various geographical regions. The largest number of programmes being proposed were for the sub-Saharan Africa region, which also contained the largest number of priority countries for UNFPA programmes overall. The quality and coverage of reproductive health services were inadequate throughout Africa, and that led to a number of problems, including high rates of maternal mortality and morbidity. In addition, harmful traditional practices, such as female genital mutilation, were widespread on the continent. The aim of all the UNFPA programmes being proposed (for Côte d'Ivoire, Kenya, Malawi, United Republic of Tanzania and Zambia) was to build up the weak institutional structures of the countries involved so that they could manage and implement their own reproductive health and population programmes.

56. In the Asia and Pacific region, two South Asian countries were being discussed - an extension of the country programme for Bangladesh and a new programme for Nepal. In those countries, the aims were to reorient population programmes to the goals of the ICPD, shifting away from target-based approaches, and to set standards for quality of care. Somewhat different was the proposed programme for Mongolia, which like many Asian countries with economies in transition needed assistance in reducing the high incidence of abortion and improving overall access to reproductive health care. An extension of the regional programme for the South Pacific was also being proposed.

57. Two countries in the Arab States region, Djibouti and Morocco, were being proposed for new country programmes. In both countries, as with other countries in the region, a major concern was the low levels of female literacy and schooling and other barriers to the empowerment of women. Morocco presented the situation of a country that had had a large number of achievements in the areas of population and reproductive health but in which some areas of the country and some segments of the population had made less progress; the proposed programme would focus on the populations and regions that had been neglected.

58. In Latin America and the Caribbean, similar problems existed. Many countries had made great strides in terms of economic improvement and in achieving their population goals, but certain segments of society, such as the poor, the indigenous populations and rural women, still lagged behind. UNFPA programmes would, therefore, concentrate their efforts in reaching out to these groups. That was the case of the proposed new programme for Mexico and the extension of the Nicaragua country programme. In all programmes in the region, a major focus would continue to be on adolescents, who were often neglected by reproductive health programmes and who suffered disproportionately from reproductive health problems. In summing up, the Deputy Executive Director (Programme) explained that by focusing on certain key issues in each region she did not mean to imply that other regions did not have similar problems.

Discussion

59. In addressing the overall programming process and the presentation of UNFPA country programmes in general, several delegations remarked that they were pleased with the new format for presenting country programmes and found recent programmes to be much improved in terms of analysis and in clearly presenting objectives and strategy, although some were better than others in that regard. However, they found that there was still room for improvement, especially in terms of lessons learned and implementation plans and the outcomes (quantifiable if possible) that were expected. One delegation stated that it approved of the way the programmes had been presented in one introductory statement and that it helped to consider the programmes in regional "clusters".

60. In general comments on the programmes themselves, one delegation questioned how realistic the prospects for some of the proposed amounts of multi-bilateral assistance were and pointed out that in many cases in the past the amounts approved had not been obtained. Delegations also noted that there continued to be a large number of proposals for extensions of programmes, some of which had had overexpenditures during the programme period. One delegation pointed out that the terms under which UNFPA would collaborate with NGOs in various countries were often quite vague. Another delegation asked that the proposed country programmes better reflect any proposed collaboration with the United Nations Joint and Co-sponsored Programme on AIDS (UNAIDS) and wondered why recently developed maternal mortality rates were not included in the programme proposals. Another delegation asked for more information concerning contraceptive procurement and logistics under proposed programmes, especially because that often constituted one of the Fund's comparative advantages in many countries. One delegation noted that the programmes did not indicate contributions that would be coming from the programme countries themselves; even if small, such contributions reinforced a sense of national ownership. It was suggested that it would be helpful to have a breakdown of the financial resources that would be devoted in proposed programmes to reproductive health services and those for information, education and communication (IEC) activities.

61. Several delegations addressed the question of the country programme approval process, with many saying that although there was value in aligning the UNFPA process with those of UNDP and UNICEF, the major priority of any adjustment should be the needs of the Fund and of the Board, not harmonization of procedures for the sake of harmonization. Some delegations commented that they felt that the UNICEF process responded more closely to what they would hope to see in place for UNFPA. One delegation stated that since the United Nations development agencies were working to harmonize their programme cycles, greater efforts should be made to harmonize the timing of their programme proposals as well. Some delegations would like to see members of the Executive Board involved earlier and more closely in the programme design process, with one delegation asking that field offices of bilateral and multilateral development assistance agencies be involved in the programme review and strategy development (PRSD) exercises and another saying that members should be involved in programme formulation after the PRSD and before the programme was presented to the internal UNFPA programme review committee. However, another delegation stated the view that the programmes proposed to the Board were meant to assist national

programmes and had to be developed with and approved by the respective Governments of the programme countries. Therefore, the early involvement of other Governments in the design process would be misplaced. In any case, the consensus of delegations was that there was no need to rush into a decision on the UNFPA country programming and approval process and that a decision at the annual session 1997 should be the goal.

Response by the administration

62. The Deputy Executive Director (Programme) thanked delegations for the positive comments they had made about the country programme presentations. She assured the Executive Board that UNFPA would continue to work to improve the programmes presented to the Board, including in terms of lessons learned and implementation plans, and reiterated that the logical framework training should be very helpful in that regard. In commenting on the recent large number of programme extensions, she noted that the situation had resulted from a wide variety of reasons, including delays in programme implementation in some cases, political disruptions in some of the countries and a desire to reduce the number of programmes to be processed by the UNFPA secretariat and discussed by the Executive Board in early 1997. In regard to multi-bilateral financing, she conceded that programmes in the past had perhaps been too optimistic but that the new programmes being presented were more conservative. However, they did include a certain flexibility to allow for possible multi-bilateral financing proposals in the future and for any increase in the Fund's core resources. In any case, greater efforts were being expended on realizing multi-bilateral funding.

63. The Deputy Executive Director (Programme) informed delegations that the Fund was rewriting its guidelines in order to be able to work more frequently with NGOs and that more specific plans should be evident in future programmes, as would any future collaboration with UNAIDS. She also stated that more detail could be given about proposed contraceptive management and procurement. She reminded delegations that many of the issues brought up were extensively discussed and addressed during the internal programming process and that it was often not possible to include all of those matters while complying with the Executive Board's wish that the country programme papers be as short as possible. That was why she was always pleased to have exchanges with the Board, so that she and her colleagues could answer specific questions that might not have been addressed in the country programme presentations.

64. In regard to the maternal mortality figures, she informed the Executive Board that the Fund was required to use the official United Nations estimates, which did not yet take the new figures into account, and that there had, in fact, been some questions about the methodology used to develop those figures. She advised delegations that she would look at the feasibility of providing a breakdown of the financial resources under reproductive health subprogrammes that would be going for the provision of services and those that would be used for IEC activities. She did say, however, that the one was often incorporated into the other and it was sometimes difficult to separate what was "services" as opposed to "IEC". She said that the Fund was trying to involve the local offices of other multilateral and bilateral donors more systematically in the

PRSD process while at the same time recognizing that the formulation of a proposed country programme was a matter between the Government and UNFPA.

Action by the Board

65. In summing up, the President said that it was clear that there was a consensus that a final decision on the UNFPA country programme approval process should wait until the annual session 1997. Given the large number of programmes being brought to the second regular session 1997, he proposed that the Executive Board adopt a process similar to that of UNDP, i.e., that they be considered on a "no-objection" basis. In the light of several clarifications, the Board agreed to that proposal with the understanding that it would be for that session only and would not pre-judge any decision that would be taken at the annual session. It was also specified that if five members asked for the detailed consideration of any one programme that would be done and that, in any case, at least three UNFPA Representatives would be invited to attend the session so that their programmes could be examined in more detail, much as had been done during the informal meeting of the current session. In response to a request for clarification, the President assured the Board that members retained the right to raise questions on any of the programmes presented to the second regular session 1997.

Africa

66. The President then asked delegations to consider the five country programmes from the Africa region that were being presented for their approval. He informed the Board that the Director of the Africa Division and the UNFPA Representatives for Côte d'Ivoire and Malawi were present to answer their questions.

Discussion

67. In regard to Côte d'Ivoire, the delegation from that country pointed out the country's great needs in terms of reducing infant and maternal mortality and in combating the spread of HIV/AIDS. In that connection, she wondered whether the Fund could help to take advantage of the large supply of natural rubber in the country to build a condom factory, which could also help to supply the needs of neighbouring countries. Another delegation questioned whether the programme had made any provisions for the reproductive health needs of the large number of refugees in the country. One delegation questioned whether adequate attention was being paid to the problem of female genital mutilation in the country. The same delegation also felt that for the African programmes as a whole not enough attention had been given to the possibilities for South-South cooperation.

68. In the discussion of the proposed Kenya country programme, delegations pointed out that the programme's plan to work to improve population and family planning statistics was much needed. There was a need to understand, and work within, the cultural attitudes and practices of the Kenyan people. Another delegation noted the great difference between urban and rural access to reproductive health services and felt that the proposed programme had not paid enough attention to that discrepancy. That delegation also felt that there was

room for improvement at the country level in coordination and cooperation between UNFPA and other development partners. Another delegation found the programme to be very ambitious and wondered how well thought through it had been; for example, it wondered whether the proposed programme did take into account the current health sector reform that was taking place in the country. That was reiterated by another delegation as well. One delegation noted with approval the focus on male involvement but felt that not enough attention had been given to a long-term strategy for sustaining the provision of contraceptives while another delegation wanted more information on the management of sexually transmitted diseases (STDs). One delegation mentioned that it felt that overall donor coordination had declined in Kenya and asked for UNFPA's assistance in putting that back on track.

69. In regard to the Malawi programme, delegations pointed out that the amount of resources being provided seemed small in relation to the country's great needs. It was also cautioned that the objectives of the proposed programme seemed to be over-ambitious and that, given the prevalence of traditional attitudes, implementation of the proposed programme might be more difficult than foreseen. One delegation noted that AIDS was a great problem in the country and perhaps needed to be given more attention than had been proposed. It was pointed out that the infrastructure for carrying out reproductive health programmes was especially weak in Malawi and perhaps the programme should focus even more on strengthening the infrastructure as well as making greater efforts to sensitize the population about population issues in order to create a more conducive environment for carrying out the proposed programme. In that regard, another delegation asked whether the Fund felt that it had struck the right balance in the proposed reproductive health activities between the provision of services and IEC and asked that the programmes break down proposed expenditures into these two categories. The same delegation asked that greater attention be paid to developing and providing quality-of-care indicators.

70. On the proposed programme for the United Republic of Tanzania, one delegation mentioned that the objectives of the programme could have been clearer and thought that the presentation should have been more critical, including self-critical, since everyone knew that not everything was proceeding perfectly. Some delegations suggested that in the United Republic of Tanzania there was room for improvement in terms of coordination and cooperation among development partners in the country. Another delegation reported, however, that its own development agency had found cooperation with UNFPA in the United Republic of Tanzania to be excellent, collaborating effectively in such areas as pursuing an integrated reproductive health care approach, working with adolescents and women's organizations and in improving data collection. Given the small number of donors in the population field in the country, cooperation was essential in order to achieve maximum results. Another delegation noted that there was a large gap between the contraceptive prevalence rate in the country and the knowledge of modern contraception and wondered how the proposed programme planned to address that. Several delegations said that the programme should provide greater detail on expected "deliverables", including some actual targets for increasing the contraceptive prevalence rate.

71. One delegation also mentioned that the health infrastructure in the United Republic of Tanzania had deteriorated and wanted to know to what extent the

UNFPA programme would help in rebuilding it. Another delegation mentioned that there was indeed a need to improve quality of care in the country and suggested that greater involvement of NGOs could be a help in that regard. Another delegation regretted that the presentation did not discuss the role that the ongoing privatization of the health sector plan would play in the ability to implement the proposed programme. That was obviously going to have a great impact on the country, as would the country's ongoing structural adjustment programme. The same delegation asked if the programme included any activities designed to address the needs of the large number of refugees in the country.

72. In discussing the proposed programme for Zambia, delegations welcomed the shift in focus to an integrated reproductive health approach, feeling that perhaps there had been too strong an emphasis on family planning in the past. One delegation wondered whether the nature of UNFPA activities in the country had enabled the Government to develop a sense of national ownership of the programme. The health sector was being restructured into a horizontal programme model, but the UNFPA programme still seemed to have a vertical approach in that it had picked a few districts for reproductive health activities. Why was that so? There also seemed to be insufficient focus on HIV/AIDS, which was a particular problem in the country. Another donor expressed appreciation that his Government and UNFPA were working well in Zambia and proposed that the two could work even more closely in expanding the contraceptive method mix in the country. The same delegation also felt that the Fund could do more to expand work with NGOs. One delegation applauded the UNFPA programme saying that it was a country that needed assistance but could make great strides in achieving the ICPD goals and, in that regard, it was particularly important to pay attention to activities that helped to build national capacity.

Response of the administration

73. In her response, the Director of the Africa Division made a number of general points. She pointed out that many of the questions being asked, or areas where delegations felt that not enough detail was being provided, had, in fact, been covered in the longer country programme documents that had been prepared for the Fund's internal programme review committee. It was just not possible to include all the details in the shorter papers designed for the Executive Board, and that was why she was pleased to be able to respond in person to these questions or concerns.

74. The UNFPA Representative for Côte d'Ivoire responded that construction of a condom factory was beyond the resources available for the proposed programme. She said that there were programme components that included the Liberian refugees in the west of the country.

75. As regards Kenya, the Director of the Africa Division reported that UNFPA was trying to improve coordination and to focus more on rural areas. The Fund's understanding was that its cooperation with the Government in health sector reform had been very helpful. There had been great changes in Kenyan society, one result being a significant drop in fertility: that was certainly not all due to UNFPA assistance but she felt that the Fund had been a positive factor in achieving those results. She stated that UNFPA was one of the smallest donors in the population field in Kenya and, therefore, really had to concentrate on

its areas of greatest strength, which were seen to be, in that context, procurement of contraceptives and working with men and with adolescents, an area where there was great cultural resistance. That was one reason why the Fund was trying to get NGOs more involved.

76. The UNFPA Representative for Malawi concurred that the amount of funding going to the country was insufficient to meet the great needs that existed. That was a function of how much resources the Fund had to spend overall. The Fund was actively trying to mobilize multi-bilateral assistance as well, and some Governments had already indicated that they were prepared to contribute to the programme. As to whether the proposed programme struck the right balance between reproductive health services and IEC, the Representative pointed out that many of the IEC activities were actually incorporated into service provision activities. It was true that the national objectives were very ambitious, and that had been much discussed during the PRSD process. The Government wanted to keep the objectives ambitious, rather than conservative, as a way of focusing national attention on the urgency of the problems: the country had been isolated for so long that there was a great lack of awareness of population and reproductive health issues. That was why the programme proposed extensive work in the areas of IEC and advocacy, in order to change behaviours and opinions on reproductive health questions. On the question of indicators, one of the first things that would be done under the proposed programme was to develop a set of reproductive health indicators on such things as infant mortality rates, maternal mortality rates, contraceptive prevalence rates, prevalence of STDs and adolescent pregnancies, both as a way to know what the current situation was and to be able to tell what progress had been made at the end of the programme.

77. The Director of the Africa Division stated that in the United Republic of Tanzania, as in other African countries, there was considerable cultural resistance to some of the activities being carried out, and the Fund had to look at ways of overcoming that. Obviously, that was not something the Fund could do on its own but had to work with the Government and civil society in bringing about a positive change. The aim was to lessen some of the cultural constraints that had inhibited family planning and other reproductive health activities in the past. One success in that area had been the socially responsible soap opera that was mentioned in the country programme presentation. Her own experience, after a visit to the United Republic of Tanzania, was that male involvement in family planning, for example, was openly discussed in the country and that she had found a very encouraging environment. The neutrality of UNFPA as a member of the United Nations system was a major advantage in helping the country to develop population and development strategies. She agreed with delegations that the health infrastructure had to be made sustainable, so that it was not beyond the capacities of the Government to maintain. Cost-sharing was becoming more and more the norm in the United Republic of Tanzania because of the introduction of structural adjustment measures; that meant that many of the people who most needed reproductive health services could not afford them.

78. The Director of the Africa Division stated that she found the assertion that there was no sense of national ownership of the Zambia country programme to be very disturbing. The programme was developed following an extensive process of national consultation in which the Government had been very much involved.

In any case, the Fund was not there to impose any process on the Government, and she would ensure that that was not the case. As for the "verticality" of the programme, 60-70 per cent of the proposed resources were going into integrated reproductive health services, and the reason that the Fund was concentrating on certain districts was because those districts were not being covered by other donors.

Action by the Executive Board

79. The Executive Board approved the proposed programmes for Côte d'Ivoire (as contained in document DP/FPA/CP/169), Kenya (DP/FPA/CP/168), Malawi (DP/FPA/CP/162), United Republic of Tanzania (DP/FPA/CP/164), and Zambia (DP/FPA/CP/163). Speaking for other African delegations as well, the delegation of Zambia expressed its appreciation to the Board and to the Fund for the efforts that were being made in the continent.

Arab States

Discussion

80. One delegation addressed the proposed programme for Djibouti, stating that previous UNFPA assistance had been very helpful but that there was clearly much that remained to be done in terms of improving the country's reproductive health situation. There was a great lack of qualified staff in the country and a dearth of reliable demographic and reproductive health statistics, both of which problems the proposed programme addressed. The programme put into relief the problems of gender in the country and addressed the widespread practice of female genital mutilation. The delegation felt that the proposed programme was perhaps too ambitious given the country's weak institutional capacity and urged the Fund to cooperate closely with other development partners, including the Economic Commission for Africa, in trying to improve Djibouti's reproductive health situation.

81. The Director of the Division for Arab States and Europe concurred with the comments made about the Djibouti programme. She emphasized that the Fund's activities in the country were quite recent and more and more efforts were being made to coordinate all of the assistance in the areas of population and reproductive health. In that regard, she stated that UNFPA relied very heavily on the UNDP office in Djibouti since there was no UNFPA Representative resident in the country. As for issues concerning women, she stated that the Fund worked through local NGOs, which were the best placed to deal with gender issues, including female genital mutilation.

Action by the Executive Board

82. The Executive Board approved the proposed programmes for Djibouti (DP/FPA/CP/167) and Morocco (DP/FPA/CP/166). Following their adoption, the delegation of Morocco expressed the appreciation of its Government for the assistance being provided. The delegation noted some of the progress that had been made in the country and the country's great support for the goals of the ICPD. It noted, however, that progress had been unequal among different parts

of the country and different segments of society, and the proposed programme focused appropriately on the neglected elements.

Asia and the Pacific

Discussion

83. The proposed extension of the Bangladesh country programme for one year received the support of delegations although some of them questioned the principle of extensions. Delegations also wanted to know in what way the proposed extension reflected the results of the PRSD and the focus of the next country programme. One delegation questioned whether enough resources were being devoted to helping improve the status of women (including in supporting girls' education), which was a priority concern in the country while another delegation felt that more resources should be devoted to IEC. Several delegations brought up the issue of cooperation in Bangladesh between UNFPA and other bilateral and multilateral donors. Some delegations felt that UNFPA had not participated sufficiently in the World Bank-led donor consortium's health and population sector strategy mission and that there had been a lack of involvement of other development partners in the PRSD exercise. One delegation also mentioned that it felt that there could be better links between IEC activities being carried out by UNFPA and child survival interventions, such as immunization campaigns, being pursued by UNICEF. On the other hand, another delegation reported that it had found cooperation between its Government's development agency and UNFPA to be quite good.

84. In discussions on the proposed programme for Nepal, one delegation felt that insufficient attention had been paid in the presentation to the role of NGOs, several of which were active in the field of family planning in the country. Another delegation felt that the goals of the proposed programme were too ambitious and regretted the lack of discussion of the potential spread of HIV/AIDS. That delegation, along with another, pointed out the importance of efforts to improve the status of women: the country showed, for example, a marked cultural preference for sons. Another delegation reported that its Government's development agency was the only one currently supporting contraceptive supply and logistics in Nepal and requested greater assistance in that regard from UNFPA.

85. In connection with the proposed extension of the South Pacific programme, one delegation expressed concerns about the delays in implementing the previous programme that had resulted in a request for an extension. That delegation felt that management, scheduling and reporting on the programme needed to be improved if the next programme was to be a success. It particularly expressed concern at the perceived lack of coordination with other agencies active in the region, especially UNICEF and the South Pacific Commission. It looked forward to the PRSD exercise in 1997, when some of those issues could be addressed. Another delegation asked why there had been overexpenditures in the past.

Response by the administration

86. In his response, the Director of the Asia and Pacific Division reported that he and the Executive Director had recently spent several days in Bangladesh examining the programme there. As was well known, the country had made tremendous strides in its family planning programme, and there had been a great reduction in fertility levels in the past 20 years. That had been achieved through a vertical structure that included a Directorate General of Family Planning. The World Bank-led consortium was now proposing a reorganization of the vertical structure in the Ministry of Health. The Fund was waiting for the Government to make a decision on that issue. However, there was a feeling both at UNFPA and in parts of the Government that care should be taken so that restructuring would not have a negative effect on the country's family planning programme, and perhaps even jeopardize some of the gains made in that area. Any merger should proceed cautiously and reflect the reality of the situation on the ground, maybe by starting the merger at the service level, which was to some extent already being done, before proceeding to an administrative merger. The Fund felt that it was supporting the Government and its policies. If there was a perceived lack of cooperation with development partners, it was largely because the UNFPA country office was small and had not been able to participate in all the meetings called by other agencies. There may have been misunderstanding among the agencies, but he felt sure that the situation was being corrected. The Fund was, for example, coordinating its IEC activities with those of the German Agency for Technical Cooperation.

87. As to why the programme was being extended, the Director explained that it was largely the result of the nationwide strikes and political unrest, which had been widely reported, that made it impossible to field a PRSD mission to the country until the second half of 1996 and had caused problems in the implementation of the programme. The PRSD had now been completed and a new country programme would be prepared during the next six months. The political situation had led to delays in the approval of programme activities related to women's empowerment. Only in 1996 were those activities finally approved. That was reflected in the decrease in the funds needed in the area of gender, population and development. In working to improve the status of women, the Fund felt that the greatest gains could be made by working with NGOs, and the programme had just received the Government's concurrence in doing so. Therefore, greater advances could be expected in the future.

88. In addressing the concerns about working with NGOs in Nepal, the Director pointed out that the largest NGO in the country in the reproductive health area was the national affiliate of the International Planned Parenthood Federation, and that UNFPA worked closely with it. What seemed to be overlooked, however, was that the Government had entrusted a large part of its family planning IEC efforts to volunteer village health workers, who were comparable to an NGO, and the proposed programme had a large component built into it to cooperate with those volunteer workers. In spite of the fact that HIV/AIDS had not been mentioned in the country programme presentation, many activities designed to combat the spread of sexually transmitted diseases, including HIV/AIDS, were incorporated into the reproductive health component of the proposed programme, and the Fund was actively cooperating with UNAIDS in Nepal. As far as the provision of contraceptives was concerned, the Fund would support a study in

1997 to assess what Nepal's needs were. That would then be discussed with the Government and with other donors to determine the role that UNFPA could best play.

89. In discussing the South Pacific regional programme, the Director reported on the difficulties of managing a programme that was made up of 14 separate countries, each of which had different needs. The Fund was making every effort to focus attention on the priority countries in the region. Several countries had come up with a large number of activities that they wanted funded, especially following the ICPD, which had mobilized a great many of the countries to view their demographic and reproductive health situations in a new light. Rather than hold back that momentum, the Fund had gone ahead and approved some important post-ICPD initiatives that had resulted in an overexpenditure of less than $1 million.

Action by the Executive Board

90. The Executive Board approved the proposed programmes for Mongolia (DP/FPA/CP/170) and Nepal (DP/FPA/CP/165) and the requested extensions of, and additional resources for, the country programmes for Bangladesh (DP/FPA/1997/2) and the South Pacific (DP/FPA/1997/3). The delegation of Bangladesh thanked the Board for approving the extension and said that the development of the new programme would provide the opportunity to clear up any misunderstandings that had occurred between the Fund and other development partners. The delegation of Mongolia expressed appreciation for the new programme, saying that the country was grappling with fundamental changes in its economy and social system and that that was leaving some of the most vulnerable parts of society, including women and children, unprotected and requiring assistance. The country strongly endorsed the ICPD. It asked to see the UNFPA country office strengthened and requested donor countries to look carefully at the possibility of supplying multi-bilateral funding under the proposed programme. The representative of Nepal also expressed its gratitude and said that the points in the programme that had been questioned by delegations had been clarified by the Director of the Asia Division. The delegation of Indonesia, speaking for all the countries of the Asia and Pacific region, expressed its thanks to the donor countries and for the explanations of the Director and said that it was glad to see that the Fund would be supporting population and development strategies and contraceptive procurement and logistics management, which it felt were comparative advantages of the Fund.

91. The President ended the discussion by saying that he appreciated the frank responses of the Director of the Asia Division in acknowledging the difficulties encountered by the Fund. Everyone knew that not every story was a success story. He said that it was helpful to the Board to hear about difficulties and problems as well as accomplishments.

Latin America and the Caribbean

Discussion

92. One delegation expressed its appreciation for the informal session, which it felt had been very helpful in understanding the proposed Mexico programme and its goals. In that regard, the delegation was pleased that the programme had been developed using a goal-oriented planning mechanism, which the Government of that delegation had used successfully. Would that mechanism be used to a greater extent in the future? The Deputy Executive Director (Programme) explained that the Fund was going to receive training in logical framework techniques, which she hoped would start to be reflected in country programmes presented to the Board at the third regular session 1997 but not in those presented to the second regular session since those programmes had already been submitted to the United Nations Office for Conference and Support Services for translation, printing and distribution. The Director of the Latin America and Caribbean Division said that the Division was involved in developing a lot of new programmes. She understood that the Board was chiefly interested in understanding the goals and strategies of the proposed programmes, and the Division was working to make sure that they were clearly presented in the country programmes.

Action by the Executive Board

93. The Executive Board approved the proposed programme for Mexico (DP/FPA/CP/161) and the extension of, and additional resources for, the programme for Nicaragua (DP/FPA/1997/1). The delegation of Mexico expressed the appreciation of its Government for the new country programme and noted that the Government of Mexico was making its own efforts to address the needs of disadvantaged parts of the country, especially in the south, and that UNFPA assistance would be a valuable complement to that. The delegation of Nicaragua thanked the Board for the extension, which would help realize the goals of the previous programme, particularly concentrating on the needs of youth and women, who most needed assistance.

III. UNFPA: FINANCIAL, BUDGETARY AND ADMINISTRATIVE MATTERS

94. For consideration of agenda item 3, the Executive Board had before it the UNFPA Financial report and audited financial statements for the biennium ended 31 December 1995 and Report of the Board of Auditors (A/51/5/Add.7) and UNFPA: Audit reports (DP/FPA/1997/4).

95. The Deputy Executive Director (Policy and Administration) introduced the reports, highlighting measures taken by UNFPA to implement the recommendations of the Board of Auditors, as indicated in document DP/FPA/1997/4. He emphasized the concerns of the Fund about the qualified audit opinion issued by the Board of Auditors as a result of the late submission of audit certificates for UNFPA-funded projects. Based on the findings of an in-depth review of project audit issues, UNFPA was in the process of revising its financial procedures to enhance internal controls and would institute a new system, to be operational in mid-1997, for monitoring compliance and for follow-up with executing agencies.

Since the qualified audit opinion was closely related to the increase in national execution, UNFPA was undertaking a thematic evaluation of execution modalities, including national execution. Moreover, the Fund had started to revise its national execution guidelines in close consultation with UNDP and was devoting special attention to monitoring issues in the context of new programming procedures.

96. The Deputy Executive Director (Policy and Administration) also stressed that the efforts of individual agencies had to be accompanied by system-wide initiatives, including joint capacity assessments and coordinated strategies at the country level in the context of the resident coordinator system. In concluding, he noted that recent measures by UNFPA had met with the approval of the Board of Auditors, as stated in their report, and pledged UNFPA commitment to the continued improvement of the Fund's management capacity.

Discussion

97. Several delegations thanked the Deputy Executive Director (Policy and Administration) for his statement and for the positive response of UNFPA to the report of the Board of Auditors, as contained in document DP/FPA/1997/4. While the UNFPA proposed course of action was largely endorsed, the Executive Board requested specific timetables for the implementation of the audit recommendations. In particular, UNFPA was asked to provide information on the deadlines set for the preparation of the guidelines and studies mentioned in the document.

98. General concern was expressed about the qualification of the audit opinion and the persistence of problems in compliance with project audit procedures despite previous recommendations on that matter. Several delegations also noted their concern about the Executive Board's findings regarding weaknesses in UNFPA management of the national execution modality. The need for improvements in UNFPA monitoring procedures and field office capacity was emphasized in order to ensure full UNFPA accountability. Increased staff training and the strengthening of field offices were considered important aspects in that process. For example, there was a general need for better control of nationally executed projects. In particular, advances should not be given in the absence of properly signed project documents and letters of understanding. However, UNFPA should not encourage field offices to take over responsibilities of national authorities. Rather, the focus should be on strengthening national capacity for project execution.

99. Some delegations also stressed the importance of a coordinated response from the United Nations development system as a whole. Inter-agency consultations would help avoid the formulation of individual guidelines and training programmes designed to address essentially identical concerns. Noting the Board of Auditors' suggestion for independent audits of sovereign Governments by UNDP, one delegation stressed that the audit certificates of qualified national authorities should continue to be fully accepted by the Board of Auditors. It was also important in that context that national execution guidelines would differentiate properly between countries with a viable, independent audit capacity and those requiring additional support.

100. Several delegations commended the Fund for recent management initiatives such as the establishment of the Task Force on Policies and Procedures. Interest was also expressed in UNFPA experiences to date with the newly created Field Unit to enhance coordination. One delegation requested more information about the operational guidelines for the management of the technical support services (TSS) system and the revised inter-agency guidelines on TSS. With regard to the management of interregional projects, one delegation expressed its concern about the Board of Auditors' findings that projects were lacking clear and quantifiable objectives. It was also suggested that programme management should be improved through the strengthening of more programme evaluations and the inclusion of lessons learned in each PRSD exercise.

101. Concerning the selection and use of consultants, one delegation urged that a more systematic approach should be developed by UNFPA, including the use of the consultants' roster maintained by the Fund. The question was raised whether the selection of consultants from the roster should not be made mandatory. More information was also requested on the procedures for the updating of the consultants' roster, especially at the field level, and on the use of national consultants to enhance capacity-building. In that context, the importance of capacity retention was emphasized. One delegation also requested clarification on the status of negative trust fund balances, of which the Board of Auditors had detected two cases.

102. Most delegations favoured a more regular dialogue on audit issues and the opportunity for closer follow-up by the Executive Board. Given the importance of the Board of Auditors' report, a biennial discussion was considered insufficient to enable close monitoring of UNFPA progress in implementing the audit recommendations. In that context, one delegation suggested that UNFPA should respond more realistically to the audit findings by setting out what could or could not be accomplished within a given time-frame for each recommendation, including conceptual problems and long-term perspectives. Such information would facilitate the monitoring tasks of the Board.

Response of the administration

103. The Deputy Executive Director (Policy and Administration) thanked the Executive Board members for their comments on UNFPA initiatives to implement the audit recommendations. He welcomed the suggestion for closer dialogue with the Board on progress made by UNFPA. Noting the requests for more specific timetables, he explained that many of the guidelines discussed by the Board were to be completed under the work plan of the Task Force on Policies and Procedures by November 1997 although some would be finished earlier. For example, the revised inter-agency guidelines on TSS were already in their final draft form and had been circulated for approval by the Inter-Agency Task Force on the TSS System. Similarly, the thematic evaluation on execution modalities was due to be completed in February 1997.

104. In response to questions about the absorptive capacity study, he noted that the study had originated from the request of the Executive Board at its annual session in May 1996 and would also provide the basis for guidelines on capacity assessments and capacity-building. He stated that the terms of reference for the study had been completed with inputs from members of the Board and thanked

the respective Governments for their valuable contributions. Regarding overall programme management issues, top priority was given by UNFPA to the comprehensive revision of the Fund's programming procedures with special attention to project objectives and enhanced monitoring and evaluation activities. He noted the UNFPA agreement with the need for strengthening programme evaluations and the identification of lessons learned in PRSD exercises. To that end, a new framework for programme and strategy development had been completed. The report was under review by the Task Force on Policies and Procedures.

105. The Deputy Executive Director (Policy and Administration) emphasized that UNFPA management shared the concerns of delegations regarding the qualified audit opinion and the management of national execution. He pointed out that the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions, in its comments on the report of the Board of Auditors, had proposed the development of a coordinated strategy by the funds and programmes for addressing shortcomings in that area. UNFPA had welcomed that proposal during the discussion of the Fifth Committee and saw its current consultation with UNDP on the development of national execution guidelines as part of that inter-agency process. At the same time, UNFPA had taken steps to strengthen field office capacity with the assistance of a management adviser to the Executive Director. Particular emphasis in that context was given to the enhancement of the Fund's staff training programme. An evaluation of training activities was under way and its findings would be submitted to the Executive Board at its third regular session 1997.

106. Concerning questions about the use of consultants, UNFPA agreed with the need for more transparency and the better deployment of national consultants. Reminders had been sent in 1996 to the country support teams and country offices to ensure the inclusion of experts at the regional and national levels in the roster maintained at headquarters. The current inter-agency guidelines on TSS emphasized that national consultants constituted the first level of expertise to be used for technical backstopping. That requirement was further highlighted in the revised version of the guidelines.

107. In responding to the query of one delegation about negative trust fund balances, he stated that one of the two cases had been resolved before the preparation of document DP/FPA/1997/4. The other case, reduced to $3,748 at the time, had been cleared by year-end 1996. However, UNFPA would increase its efforts to avoid a recurrence of that problem.

Action by the Board

108. The Executive Board adopted the following decision:

97/2. UNFPA: Audit reports

The Executive Board

1. Takes note of the comments made by the United Nations Population Fund in document DP/FPA/1997/4 in response to the recommendations made in the report

of the United Nations Board of Auditors for the biennium 1994-1995 (A/51/5/Add.7);

2. Requests the secretariat to provide the Executive Board, at its first regular session 1998, with an updated overview of the implementation of the recommendations of the Board of Auditors and an updated timetable indicating the dates when follow-up action will have been completed in the areas that need to be addressed, namely, trust funds, national execution, technical support services arrangements, management of interregional projects and the selection and use of consultants;

3. Requests the secretariat to provide an update on the progress achieved in the implementation of the recommendations of the auditors at the first regular session of the Executive Board each year, as a matter of routine, under the agenda item "Financial, budgetary and administrative matters".

16 January 1997

IV. UNFPA: COORDINATION IN HEALTH POLICY AND PROGRAMMING

109. The President reminded delegations that at the third regular session 1996, the Executive Board had adopted decision 96/38, which requested the President of the Board to initiate contacts with the Executive Boards of the World Health Organization (WHO) and UNICEF on the possibility of the UNDP/UNFPA Executive Board becoming a member of the UNICEF/WHO Joint Committee on Health Policy. In the absence of the outgoing President, Ambassador Annette des Iles, Ms. Cecilia Rebong, outgoing Vice-President, would report to the Board on that initiative.

110. The outgoing Vice-President briefed members on developments to date on actions taken in order for the Executive Board to join the UNICEF/WHO Joint Committee on Health Policy. The President had written to the heads of the Executive Boards of WHO and UNICEF as requested. In the meantime, the Executive Director had written to her counterparts at the two organizations asking for their assistance in bringing the issue to their Boards. The Deputy Executive Director (Policy and Administration) had informed the UNICEF Executive Board at its third regular session 1996 of the decision taken by the UNDP/UNFPA Executive Board. The UNICEF Executive Board agreed to consider the question at its first regular session 1997. The Director-General of WHO and the Executive Director of UNICEF addressed a joint letter to the Executive Director of UNFPA laying out proposed arrangements for a new UNICEF/WHO/UNFPA Coordinating Committee on Health, which they intended to propose to their respective Boards. The UNDP/UNFPA Executive Board had before it, in document DP/FPA/1997/5, those proposed arrangements for its consideration.

111. Delegations welcomed the prompt response of the previous Bureau and the UNFPA secretariat in carrying out decision 96/38. Several delegations reiterated that they continued to feel that UNFPA membership in the Joint Committee would be of value both to the Committee and to the Fund, with one delegation stressing that membership should not place a cumbersome administrative burden on UNFPA. The concern of many delegations was that it was

not clear from the correspondence on that issue that UNFPA would constitute a full member of the new Coordinating Committee. Would, for example, UNFPA be allowed to participate only in discussions that were of "direct relevance" to the Fund? Would the Fund be, in some sense, merely an observer at the Committee proceedings? The commonly expressed view was that the UNDP/UNFPA Executive Board should pursue membership only if it was to be on the basis of complete equality with other members.

112. The President asked the Executive Director to address those concerns. She explained that some of the confusion concerning the UNFPA role came from the language of decision 96/38, which called on the Fund to participate as an observer at the Joint Committee's January 1997 meeting. In the meantime, that January meeting had been cancelled so that it was now possible for the Executive Boards of all three organizations to take action for UNFPA to become a full member of the new Coordinating Committee in time for the next scheduled meeting, which would be in May 1997. That new time-frame would provide the opportunity for the secretariats of the three organizations to work on draft terms of reference for the new Coordinating Committee, which could possibly be presented to the UNDP/UNFPA Executive Board at its second regular session 1997, scheduled to take place in March. The Executive Director assured the Board that UNFPA would participate on a completely equal basis with the other two member organizations. With that assurance, the Board adopted the following decision:

97/1. UNICEF/WHO/UNFPA Coordinating Committee on Health

The Executive Board

1. Takes note of the note of the President on coordination in health policy and programming: follow-up to Executive Board decision 96/38 (DP/FPA/1997/5);

2. Endorses the proposed arrangements contained in document DP/FPA/1997/5, as follows:

(a) That the present UNICEF/WHO Joint Committee on Health Policy be known as the UNICEF/WHO/UNFPA Coordinating Committee on Health;

(b) That the terms of reference of the UNICEF/WHO/UNFPA Coordinating Committee on Health be amended accordingly, in consultation with the secretariats of the three organizations;

(c) That the agenda of the meetings of the UNICEF/WHO/UNFPA Coordinating Committee on Health be organized in such a way that matters of greatest relevance to the United Nations Population Fund are clustered together;

3. Recommends that the Executive Board of the United Nations Development Programme and of the United Nations Population Fund become a member of the UNICEF/WHO/UNFPA Coordinating Committee on Health;

4. Requests the President of the Executive Board of the United Nations Development Programme and of the United Nations Population Fund, with assistance of the secretariat of the United Nations Population Fund, to bring the present decision to the attention of the Executive Boards of the United Nations Children's Fund and the World Health Organization;

5. Requests the secretariat of the Executive Board to circulate, as soon as they are available, the amended terms of reference of the UNICEF/WHO/UNFPA Coordinating Committee on Health.

16 January 1997

UNDP/UNFPA SEGMENT

V. HARMONIZATION OF PRESENTATION OF BUDGETS

113. For its consideration of this item, the Executive Board had before it the following documents: Harmonization of budgets: UNDP, UNFPA and UNICEF (DP/1997/2 and Add.1) and the report of the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions (DP/1997/10).

114. The Assistant Administrator and Director, Bureau of Finance and Administration, UNDP, introduced the item on behalf of both UNDP and UNFPA. He stated that with the presentation of the formal proposals on harmonization to the current session of the Executive Board, the two organizations had reached a remarkable milestone, and that UNICEF planned to present the same proposals to its Executive Board. The Assistant Administrator reviewed the steps that had led to the presentation of the formal proposals.

115. The harmonization project had started in 1994 with decisions adopted by the respective Executive Boards requesting the heads of UNDP, UNFPA and UNICEF to work towards harmonizing their presentation of budgets, with a view to achieving common definitions and obtaining a higher degree of financial transparency and comparability. The Board had been informed that work based on the current 1996-1997 budgets of each organization could begin in mid-February 1996. That was owing to the decisions taken by the UNICEF Executive Board, outside the context of the harmonization project, on the integrated budget of UNICEF. As a result, much of the work done on harmonization during 1995 had been superseded.

116. The Assistant Administrator noted that the Executive Board had been kept informed during 1995 and 1996 of the progress made through a number of status reports and working papers. An oral progress report had been given to the Economic and Social Council during its substantive session in 1996. In addition, a number of informal joint meetings of the UNDP/UNFPA and the UNICEF Executive Boards had been held.

117. A number of exchanges on the subject had provided important guiding principles for the project, specifically a comprehensive statement by one delegation, endorsed by other delegations, to both the UNDP/UNFPA and UNICEF Executive Boards. Accordingly, a consensus had been established that harmonization should mean making the budget presentations more similar in order

to promote understanding and support good decision-making, and that similarity should go beyond content and presentation styles alone. Harmonization could and should not mean sameness. It was felt that harmonization should encompass the underlying principles in the preparation of budgets.

118. The Assistant Administrator referred to another important principle that was expressed by the Executive Board during the informal sessions, that analysis and information should support strategic policy development and decision-making by the Executive Boards, rather than overly involving the Boards in budget details.

119. The proposals presented covered: (a) a common format for presentation of the biennial support budgets; (b) common terms and definitions related thereto; and (c) a common methodology for the preparation of the budget estimates.

120. The Assistant Administrator expressed his appreciation for the positive feedback that had already been received informally from some of the delegations. He stated that if the outcome of the harmonization exercise was positive, the credit would also go to the Executive Board and to the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions (ACABQ). He noted the constructive support and cooperation provided by members of the Board and by ACABQ over the years. The organizations were particularly encouraged by the comments of ACABQ, in which the Committee stated that the proposals presented would indeed contribute to a comprehensive and transparent budget presentation.

121. All delegations welcomed and congratulated the organizations on arriving at the proposals on the harmonization of budgets. Delegations were appreciative of the hard work and the quality of the work undertaken by the joint UNDP/UNFPA/UNICEF harmonization working group. Delegations were very encouraged by the positive comments of ACABQ on the proposals and agreed that the proposals would indeed contribute to a comprehensive and transparent budget presentation. Some delegations requested the organizations to share their experience with other agencies of the United Nations system so that greater consistency would be promoted in the presentation of the support budgets within the United Nations system.

122. Many delegations noted that the common presentation format, the common terms and definitions, and the common methodology in the preparation of budget estimates would assist the Executive Board in comparing the budgets of the three organizations. The delegations looked forward to the presentation of the 1998-1999 biennial budget proposals under the harmonized approach and saw it as the practical test where further suggestions for refinement could be considered.

123. Several delegations emphasized the importance of monitoring the implementation of the proposals. One delegation, while very pleased with the proposals, referred to its full satisfaction with the UNICEF integrated budget approach, and felt that a similar approach could be useful to UNDP and UNFPA.

124. One delegation stated that it would be useful if the budget compared budgeted (i.e., projected/planned) to actual use of resources. In addition to variance analyses, that delegation also stressed the importance of trend analyses in the context of budgets. The delegation also asked how capital

expenditures on and income from office fund would be separately presented within a capital assets fund that would operate on the basis of appropriations from general resources as a capital budget (see para. 16 of DP/1997/CRP.3).

125. Another speaker expressed appreciation for the remarkable work done and requested that, while the organizations were unique in their missions, the text accompanying the budget tables should be exhaustive and summarized. The same delegation suggested that the general definitions should be supplemented for each individual organization when the actual budgets were presented. In addition, the same delegation also suggested that a table on posts be included, similar to that on the use of resources.

126. One delegation, also speaking on behalf of another, stated that the objectives on harmonization put forward by one delegation in March 1996 and endorsed by the Executive Board, had been achieved. Those objectives covered a common definition and usage of budget terms, commonly accepted accounting approaches and policies, disclosure of basic key information, minimum requirements for content and a common presentational style. The same delegation stated that a consultancy commissioned by a Member State to assess the work carried out and the results achieved had been very positive. The delegation stated that the results achieved had gone a long way in having the budgets simplified, made more transparent and comprehensive and easier to compare. The delegation underlined that it was now the responsibility of the Board to use the tool, by investing time to understand the package and learning to work with it, as a means of managing at a strategic level, and to protect it from dilution. Differences would again occur if the Board were to increase its requests for details that were not of a strategic nature. Finally, the delegation considered it vital that the organizations continue their commitment to harmonization and work towards budgeting for results against planned corporate goals.

127. Another delegation, while commending the organizations for the results achieved, expressed some reservations regarding definitions and terminology. While agreeing with the view of the organizations that a classification based on organizational units was the most practical one, it was not the most logical. The delegation felt that it could accept the definitions provided by the organizations but that clarifications should be provided in the text when the budgets were presented, covering precise descriptions of the activities and outputs, objectives and targets, for purposes of monitoring performance.

128. The same delegation then requested clarification as to how administrative costs for earmarked multi-bi programmes were defined, so as to know whether such programmes were subsidized by the regular budget. In addition, the delegation asked whether the support function at the country level was defined as programme or programme support. Another point mentioned by the same delegation related to the format and contents of the budget mock-up. While commending the format of the tables, the delegation felt that as a result of the weakness of the definitions and the complex nature of the organizations, it was important to specify in more detail what the substantive contents of each budget line included. Finally, the delegation stressed the need for the organizations to continue the harmonization process, including work on common key indicators for measuring performance, such as regular budget compared to extrabudgetary funds,

proportion of administrative budgets derived from various components, professional to non-professional staff and programme funds per position.

129. One delegation requested the organizations to assess the experience of the harmonized approach at the end of the cycle. The same delegation queried as to whether the organizational chart was a hypothetical one, and stated that due recognition be given to the existing organizational structures.

130. Another delegation sought clarification about the Assistant Administrator's statement as to why the harmonization work based on the 1996-1997 budgets had not commenced before mid-February 1996.

131. The President, in summarizing the comments of the delegations, noted the overall positive endorsement of the proposals presented. The Executive Board looked forward to the third regular session, when actual figures would be included under the new format. He encouraged the organizations to share the experience with other agencies of the United Nations system.

132. The Assistant Administrator thanked the President and delegations for their kind words and said that success could not have been achieved without the encouragement of the Executive Board. The groundwork had been undertaken by the three organizations and should be considered one of the major steps in a continuous effort. The actual presentation of the budget with real numbers would help the organizations to deal with remaining issues as they came to light. He stated that the organizations had been keeping the Consultative Committee on Administrative Questions (Finance and Budget) informed of the progress made. On the subject of capital budgeting for UNDP, the Assistant Administrator mentioned that the subject was related to the Reserve for Field Accommodation, which was not included in the biennial budget. The subject of capital budgeting was under review.

133. The Chief of Budget, UNDP, stated that the harmonization working group was well aware that the current proposals were only the beginning of the process, and that with actual numbers more experience would be gained.

134. Regarding the need for more detail in the main document, the Chief of Budget, UNDP, indicated that the approach had been to keep the main document at the aggregate level and that detailed information could be made available upon request. It should be noted that in the actual document there would be narratives that were not included in the mock-up and that would provide substantive information and justification to support the budget proposals.

135. With regard to definitions, the Chief of Budget, UNDP, mentioned that the organizations were aware that more work was needed. He stated that such refinement would happen when the actual budgets were prepared. Similarly, both the Director, Division of Finance, Personnel and Administration, UNFPA, and Chief of Budget, UNDP, indicated that the differences between programmes, programme support and management and administration would be fully clarified when required.

136. Regarding the query on the organizational chart in the mock-up, the Chief of Budget, UNDP, indicated that it was indeed a hypothetical one, and that the

relevant actual organizational chart of each organization would be included when the budgets were presented.

137. On the query regarding the delay by the organizations in commencing the harmonization work based on the 1996-1997 budgets, the Chief of Budget, UNDP, stated that UNICEF had been obligated to present to its Executive Board its new integrated budget outside the harmonization process. The 1996-1997 UNICEF budget had therefore not been available prior to February 1996.

138. The Director of the Division of Finance, Personnel and Administration, UNFPA, also thanked the delegations for their positive comments, and agreed that the first step had indeed been taken. She indicated that with the real budget proposals the organizations could fine tune the presentations as necessary.

139. With regard to the relationship between the administrative and programme budgets, the Director, UNFPA, indicated that there would be some information in the budget document. However, more information would be presented in other documents, such as the work plan.

140. On revised estimates, the Director, UNFPA, indicated that while ACABQ had some comments, they did not have any problems. The Chief of Budget, UNDP, stated that owing to the timing of the preparation of budget documents for the Executive Board, it had not been possible to include actual expenditures.

141. The Director, UNFPA, stated that the organizations were committed to not allowing harmonization to lapse and to avoiding the inclusion of too much detail, so that the current proposals would remain a tool for strategic decision-making. On the treatment of support costs covering multi-bi assistance, the Director, UNFPA, indicated that it was based on incremental costs.

142. With regard to earmarked resources, the Chief of Budget, UNDP, stated that the resource planning table would provide, in a very clear and transparent manner, the use of such resources, by location, for programmes, programme support and management and administration.

143. The Executive Board approved the proposed format for the biennial support budget of UNDP and UNFPA as contained in document DP/1997/2.

UNDP SEGMENT

Statement by the Administrator

144. The Administrator welcomed the new members and Bureau of the Executive Board and paid tribute to the outgoing Bureau and Board members. He expected that 1997 would be a productive year, with constructive dialogue, decisions approved by consensus, and enhanced working methods. He underlined the challenges and opportunities of 1997, noting the new era ushered in by the election of the new Secretary-General, Mr. Kofi Annan. Key issues in 1997 included the acceleration of the implementation of landmark legislation adopted by the Board, delivery of the UNDP programme, accountability, and the change

management process. A vision of where UNDP should be in the twenty-first century was emerging. That vision included better definition of the relationship with development partners, improvement of the lives of people living in poverty, the evolution of a learning organization, and the utilization of country-specific experience. UNDP would be value-driven, well-managed and responsible, as well as efficient and decisive. Recommendations from the change process would be presented to the Board at its annual session. The recommendations would focus on quality service to programme countries, effectiveness and impact, and efficiency and accountability.

145. The Administrator underlined the importance of the work plan for 1997. He noted the attention being given to ensuring that the discussion at the annual session would be interesting and focused, and that it would include a high-level panel on poverty eradication. He then reviewed a number of events that had taken place since the previous session and welcomed the questions and comments of the Executive Board on his remarks.

146. Several delegations welcomed the Administrator's statement. One delegation requested information on the accountability framework. Another stressed the importance of monitoring programme delivery in 1997 and requested information on quantitative targets for delivery. Monitoring the success of the country cooperation frameworks was also a priority. One speaker underlined the importance of looking at issues from the perspective of the country level. Continued dialogue with the Executive Board on the change process was encouraged.

147. One delegation requested information on how UNDP could guarantee meeting the resource mobilization target of $3.3 billion included in Executive Board decision 95/23. Another delegation noted that with the rise in non-core funding, it seemed that the Board was governing only one third of the funding of UNDP. More information on the appropriateness of non-core funding activities of the UNDP programme was sought.

148. One speaker, on behalf of the African Group, pledged its intention to work with other regional representatives in 1997 to strengthen UNDP country offices and to support the resident coordinator system. Funding of the core budget was essential. More concrete reporting on the United Nations System-wide Special Initiative for Africa would be welcomed.

149. The Administrator stated that the accountability framework would be discussed further at the present and future sessions as well as within the context of the change management process. He anticipated that "knowledge networks" would be set up as part of overall enhanced information systems in UNDP. An expanded internal audit function was envisaged. Empowerment of people living in poverty would be stressed, with UNDP working in complementarity with other United Nations entities. He informed the Executive Board that targets had been set for programme delivery, which was the first priority of UNDP. A six-month travel restriction on senior managers and resident representatives was one of the measures that had been implemented recently.

150. One delegation requested information on the relationship of UNDP with the World Bank. Another delegation emphasized the need to maintain adequate field

structures in all regions. Several speakers welcomed the Administrator's efforts to mobilize core resources, with some noting that UNDP could not undertake that activity alone. One delegation suggested that special schemes could be utilized to enhance resource mobilization. The speaker also saw linkage between resource mobilization and an information strategy that would have a positive influence on the public in donor countries. Sound and clear evaluation of impact of UNDP programmes, or success stories, was needed to enhance the public image of the organization. One delegation suggested greater involvement of the private sector in resource mobilization.

151. Another speaker requested information on how UNDP was helping to disseminate information on goals endorsed by the Development Assistance Committee of the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD/DAC) and contained in the document entitled "Shaping the 21st Century: The Contribution of Development Cooperation". More information was sought about the role of the Administrator as Special Coordinator for Economic and Social Development.

152. The Administrator stated that he would welcome greater involvement of the Executive Board in responsibility for programmes involving non-core resources. Enhanced coordination at the country level was of the utmost importance, as was having the best staff as resident coordinators. He noted that resident representatives were being appointed from other United Nations entities. He drew the attention of the Board to two papers distributed at the present session: one on the role of UNDP and the resident coordinator, and another on his work as Special Coordinator for Economic and Social Development. With regard to the OECD/DAC goals for the twenty-first century, he underlined the confluence of interests between UNDP and OECD/DAC. The two organizations were cooperating closely in the areas of poverty eradication and follow-up to conferences. The relationship between UNDP and the World Bank was quite good, including through work in the follow-up to international conferences and the Special Initiative for Africa. He commented on various aspects of United Nations reform, including efforts within individual United Nations bodies, with regard to inter-agency machinery, and at the broader intergovernmental level. In response to a query raised, he stated that UNDP would pay due attention to staffing levels and field structure in the budget strategy for 1998-1999. He welcomed the remarks made regarding resource mobilization, impact assessment and enhanced cooperation with the private sector. With regard to the latter, he noted the plan to have a committee for UNDP in the United States of America, an effort that he hoped would be replicated in other regions.

VI. COUNTRY COOPERATION FRAMEWORKS AND RELATED MATTERS

First global cooperation framework

153. The Assistant Administrator and Director of the Bureau for Policy and Programme Support (BPPS) introduced the revised text of the first global cooperation framework (DP/GCF/1). He noted that the revised paper would have benefited from an earlier consultation process. He reviewed the concerns raised at the third regular session 1996 during the discussion of the first version of the global cooperation framework. He also made several comments regarding the

overall role and importance of the global programme. It addressed problems common to many programme countries relating to sustainable human development (SHD) in general but more specifically to issues such as water supply, food security, sustainable energy, health research, and HIV/AIDS. Evaluations of the Special Programme Resources and the global and interregional programmes had pointed out shortcomings but had also made a strong case for the role of intercountry programmes in UNDP. He noted a number of the more critical observations of the evaluations, including the multiplicity of areas of concentration, which created a fragmented programme; the difficulty of evaluating programmes in the area; low priority to building partnerships; and the low degree of visibility within UNDP. He recognized the need for greater focus but also emphasized the need for flexibility since the global programme represented the only budget line through which UNDP could respond to emerging issues and support important global partnerships.

154. The current global programme differed from its predecessors in both substantive focus and programme management, as well as in overall funding levels and resource allocation within the programme. The vast majority of global programme resources would be spent in the following areas: macro-policy frameworks for SHD; energy, food security and water for the rural and urban poor; sustainable livelihoods, improved capabilities, and job creation for the poor; national capacity-building for gender analysis and gender-sensitive policy and legal frameworks; governance institutions; and public sector management. Within that context, the global programme aimed at analysing important issues and trends of relevance to SHD where multilateral cooperation could play a role in terms of advocacy and/or capacity-building. It would also be used to support global partnerships in responding to key challenges in UNDP focus areas. A significant share of the resources would be used for strategy and methodology development, as well as for the testing of programme tools and instruments. UNDP would aim to improve the quality of information available to decision makers, including the development of indicators and benchmarks, as well as the use of information technology to advance further sustainable development and poverty reduction.

155. A second category of resources would be available to respond to new and emerging issues, to honour long-standing commitments to global partnerships, and to support a limited number of issues covered in the framework.

156. Many delegations commented on document DP/GCF/1 and the introduction by the Assistant Administrator. Most delegations stated that while the information provided orally at the session was very useful, document DP/GCF/1 did not address adequately the concerns raised at the third regular session. While some speakers stated that they could approve the framework if a strategy paper on global cooperation was presented at a future session, others stated that they were not in a position to accept the framework at all at the current session. Some delegations noted that an accurate picture of the activities in the global programme should be provided in the document. Greater clarity, specificity, prioritization, and incorporation of evaluation findings were needed. One speaker, on behalf of the African Group, said that the basic layout of the framework, including the themes, was acceptable, and queried whether South-South or triangular cooperation could be incorporated. A number of delegations asked that the findings of the evaluation of global, interregional and regional

programmes issued in November 1996 be taken into account in the global framework. Several delegations stressed the importance of performance indicators and benchmarks to the programme. It was mentioned that UNDP could work with donor agencies in some areas covered by the framework.

157. One delegation stated that they could not approve the document because it entailed endorsing the spending of $126 million to be available under line 1.3 for the period 1997-1999. The document needed to be more specific to justify spending that amount of money. The delegation acknowledged that the Executive Board had not been precise enough in their instructions but emphasized that greater time and energy was needed to elaborate a new document. The document should include specific structured objectives with project descriptions, amounts of allocation for delivery of the projects, reflection of evaluation findings, project-by-project value added and impact in the field, and demonstration of the comparative advantage of UNDP in its interventions. Another delegation underlined that the format of a country cooperation framework should not be applied for the global cooperation framework. The global framework needed to be more specific. Inclusion of strategic thinking and an outline for implementation was essential. One speaker noted that UNDP was already authorized to begin to implement its global cooperation framework, but new activities should not be started until a further plan was presented and approved by the Executive Board.

158. The need for a clear division of labour on global programmes with other organizations was underlined by several delegations. One delegation requested information on what projects would be cut if there was a shortage of funds and whether opportunities existed for co-financing. One delegation stated that the Executive Board did not need all the details of the projects since that would entail micro-management. However, as another speaker noted, accountability was a key issue and the Executive Board needed to be assured that the activities in the global framework were supportable. Several delegations emphasized the need for a more cross-sectoral view of the areas of gender and environment. One delegation underlined the importance of the use of indicators to achieve the goals of the global programme, and requested information about collaboration of UNDP with OECD/DAC in that area. Another speaker stressed the importance of linkage with the follow-up to international global conferences.

159. The Assistant Administrator assured the Executive Board that consultations would be held at an early stage with regard to any future documentation on the global programme. A series of brownbag luncheons would be planned to discuss the issues raised by the Executive Board. In response to a query raised, he stated that the table containing percentages of resources to be allocated in the global programme had been omitted from the revised framework because detailed project descriptions were not currently available, making it difficult to provide an accurate breakdown of resource allocation by theme. Such information would be available only in 1998 or 1999. He noted that line 1.3 provided funding for a flexible response by UNDP to important upcoming SHD requirements. UNDP would avoid duplication of activities undertaken by other organizations. Its participation in joint activities with other United Nations agencies provided for a coordinated response to problems. The Assistant Administrator noted that UNDP could not abruptly discontinue its commitment to major co-financing arrangements, even when its financial contribution was minor,

although such arrangements might be gradually phased out. UNDP relied on the expertise available in other institutions through those partnerships.

160. He underlined the greater focus that had been included in the draft framework presented at the current session. Greater clustering of the 25 categories shown in the document could be undertaken to show fewer categories, with some subcategories being phased out. The Assistant Administrator assured the Executive Board that while it would be possible to include even greater focus in the framework, UNDP had listened to the comments of Board members at the third regular session 1996 and would continue to move in the direction of much greater focus. He reiterated that it would be difficult at the current time to provide a breakdown of amount to be spent by category.

161. In response to a query, he noted that private sector activities had not been elaborated in the document. There were important interventions in that area, including work on micro-credits and micro-enterprises, but it remained a small component of the overall programme. He also underlined that managers were instructed to incorporate gender mainstreaming and environmental sustainability in their programmes. With regard to linkages with country programmes, global partnerships aimed at expanding membership with the South, as well as technical cooperation and capacity-building. UNDP was working with other organizations on development of indicators, particularly with regard to situation analysis.

162. The Administrator thanked the Executive Board for its helpful and constructive comments. He assured the Board that the results of evaluations would be taken into account in developing a strategy and implementation framework for the global programme. UNDP would bring a heightened sense of priorities and focus to the programme and make a concerted effort to prioritize and eliminate those activities not related to its core mission. UNDP shared the concern of the Executive Board that even greater focus could be given to the global programme. A chart on the UNDP areas of focus was distributed to the Board. The Administrator noted that the chart also showed the framework for follow-up to international conferences He expected to bring a quantitative allocation of resources to the programme as early as possible. Partnerships and co-financing brought a diversity of approaches and were very valuable. Co-financing brought in needed resources and helped to avoid overlaps between activities in different organizations. It enabled UNDP to be a participant in large processes where it could represent the interests of programme countries.

163. The Executive Board approved the following decision:

97/5. First global cooperation framework

The Executive Board

1. Takes note of the revised draft of the first global cooperation framework as contained in document DP/GCF/1, as well as the statements of the Administrator and the Assistant Administrator on the revised draft;

2. Recalls its decision 96/42;

3. Requests the Administrator, taking into account the comments made by members of the Executive Board at the current session, to elaborate further the first global cooperation framework draft, through early consultation with the Board, and to produce for the third regular session 1997 a revised proposal for consideration and approval by the Board; this proposal shall include a strategic plan for implementation and take into account the following guidelines:

(a) The need to take fully into account the findings of the United Nations Development Programme evaluation "Global interregional and regional programmes: an evaluation of impact" (November 1996) as well as the comments of delegations at the current session;

(b) The need to focus on programme activities that: (i) have a global nature and perspective; (ii) cannot be implemented under regional or country programmes; (iii) can enhance national efforts to achieve Sustainable Human Development;

(c) The need to prioritize programme activities and focus them, within its existing mandate and on priority areas, where the United Nations Development Programme can make a real difference;

(d) The need to avoid duplication while strengthening collaboration with relevant bodies within and external to the United Nations system;

4. Stresses that the revised proposal should:

(a) Contain, for the information of the Board, a detailed overview of ongoing activities which will be discontinued during 1997-1999;

(b) Specify how programme activities will be monitored and evaluated, based on performance indicators and benchmarks, particularly concerning their impact at the country level;

5. Decides that in the meantime:

(a) Activities for which commitments have already been made shall continue;

(b) Up to a total of 33.3 per cent from the global resources under line 1.3 can be committed for activities, in a manner consistent with the guidelines outlined in paragraphs 3(a) to 3(d) of the present decision;

(c) The revised proposal should include, as an annex, a list of ongoing and planned activities for the information of the Executive Board.

17 January 1997

Regional cooperation framework for Latin America and the Caribbean

164. The Assistant Administrator and Director of the Regional Bureau for Latin America and the Caribbean (RBLAC) introduced the regional cooperation framework

for Latin America and the Caribbean (DP/RCF/RLA/1). He noted that wide consultations had been undertaken with Governments in preparing the regional cooperation framework. UNDP would work with many different networks in fulfilling the goals of regional cooperation, including academic institutions and NGOs. Technical cooperation among developing countries (TCDC) would continue to be increased. Gender mainstreaming was also a key feature of the new framework. Indicators for success would be identified at the stage of project design in order to determine better the impact of projects in the regional programme.

165. One delegation, on behalf of the Latin America and Caribbean region, thanked the RBLAC for the regional cooperation framework, which was strategic and focused. Although the region was diverse, the framework demonstrated that its constituent countries could be brought together on a number of issues that formed regional priorities. The preparatory process, which had included extensive consultations at the regional level, was most appreciated.

166. Several delegations expressed wide support for the framework, including the incorporation of results and lessons learned from past cooperation, in particular the importance of prior consultations in drawing up the framework, fewer projects with greater focus and the importance given to evaluation. Many speakers cited the relevance of the proposed strategy and thematic areas outlined in the document, highlighting particular areas of interest, notably science and technology, trade, the needs of small island developing countries and TCDC. Some speakers underlined the need to raise additional resources for the implementation of the programme. One delegation welcomed the participation of UNDP in multi-bi cooperation in the region and offered its support to strengthen it further. Several delegations underlined the need to highlight the interventions in gender mainstreaming and the environment.

167. One delegation asked how the regional programme would relate to the global cooperation framework and to what extent poverty eradication was addressed in the programme. It also requested more information on the establishment of information systems and the provision of services to mobilize additional resources in the region referred to in paragraph 12 of the document. Another delegation requested information about a specific framework for the Caribbean subregion and about references to working with the media to encourage democracy, and queried whether the resources for particular activities had been earmarked. That speaker also requested further information from UNDP on the funding for each region.

168. The Assistant Administrator underlined the interlinkage of the regional and national themes and priorities. There had been close collaboration with national focal points and with the country offices in developing the regional cooperation framework. Local offices would assume coordination of the links between regional and national programmes. He noted that poverty eradication was well incorporated in the programme, including through Global Environment Facility (GEF) projects. In response to a query, he stated that the supply of services was self-financed. He underlined the increased attention RBLAC would devote to evaluation activities. For example, an impartial evaluation on progress in gender mainstreaming would be undertaken. He noted that the focal points for gender typically were also the focal points for poverty in country

offices. The linkage of the regional programme with the global programme was outlined, with particular reference to interventions in the area of governance. Information on activities in governance in the region was distributed to the Executive Board.

169. The Assistant Administrator underlined the commitment of UNDP to working with all countries and welcomed the possibility for multi-bi cooperation. He noted that UNDP cooperated with the Caribbean Community (CARICOM) and that 25 per cent of the regional programme was devoted to the Caribbean subregion. By theme, the regional programme devoted 60 per cent of its resources to poverty eradication and governance; 20 per cent to environment; 15 per cent to trade and integration; and 5 per cent to science and technology. Through the Regional programme, RBLAC was exploring ways of cooperating with the media in promoting ideas relating to sustainable development and specifically to the culture of democracy.

170. The Associate Administrator informed the Executive Board that each regional bureau in UNDP had agreed to earmark a minimum of 20 per cent for gender-in-development activities in their respective regional programmes. The internal Programme Management Oversight Committee would monitor that aspect of the programmes. Other means of strengthening gender mainstreaming were through the use of regional programme advisers of UNIFEM, the development of models for gender mainstreaming, and the possible use of United Nations Volunteers specialists as gender-in-development advisers in country offices. He informed the Executive Board that 90 per cent of the total resources available annually to regional programmes had been distributed based upon proportionality of country resources for each region with the balance of 10 per cent divided equally among the Regional Bureau for Arab States, RBLAC and the Regional Bureau for Europe and the Commonwealth of Independent States. All regional programmes would receive more resources in the successor programming arrangements, with the largest proportion on an annual basis attributed to Africa ($30.3 million), followed by Asia and the Pacific ($22.394 million), Arab States ($7.657 million), Latin America and the Caribbean ($6.925 million) and Eastern Europe/Commonwealth of Independent States ($6.742 million).

171. The Executive Board approved the regional cooperation framework for Latin America and the Caribbean (DP/RCF/RLA/1).

First country cooperation framework for Belize (DP/CCF/BEL/1)

172. The Assistant Administrator noted that the cooperation of UNDP with Belize was covered from El Salvador. Extrabudgetary funding supported one international professional to cover the Belize programme. The programme focused on poverty eradication and capacity development as well as sustainable environment. It was hoped that the seed capital of $300,000 in Belize would attract more funding.

173. The first country cooperation framework for Belize (DP/CCF/BEL/1) was approved by the Executive Board on a no-objection basis.

174. The representative of Belize expressed his Government's appreciation for the past and current assistance provided by UNDP to Belize. It was hoped that

the sub-office would be strengthened with the provision of an international officer and the implementation of planned programmes. The Government of Belize pledged its cooperation to the implementation of the programme.

Regional Bureau for Europe and the Commonwealth of Independent States

General discussion

175. The Assistant Administrator and Director of the Regional Bureau for Europe and the Commonwealth of Independent States (RBEC) introduced the six country cooperation frameworks presented to the Executive Board on a no-objection basis under the provisions of Board decision 96/7. The documents before the Board were the first country cooperation frameworks for the Czech Republic (DP/CCF/CZE/1), Hungary (DP/CCF/HUN/1), Kazakstan (DP/CCF/KAZ/1), Kyrgyzstan (DP/CCF/KYR/1), Moldova (DP/CCF/MOL/1) and Slovakia (DP/CCF/SLO/1). It was noted that five written requests for discussion by the Board of the frameworks for Kyrgyzstan and Slovakia had been received and thus, in accordance with Executive Board decision 96/7, those CCFs would be discussed by the Board.

176. The Assistant Administrator referred to several characteristics of UNDP programmes in the region: the preparation of national human development reports and project achievement reports supported by regional programme funds, promotion of national execution as the modality of choice, focus on upstream intervention, the heavy workload of resident coordinators, who were often without a Deputy or Assistant Resident Representative, in addition to being the only United Nations presence in the country, and policies that promoted SHD. He added that several countries had requested UNDP to assist them in their graduation from grant assistance to emerging donors, including support for their goal to join regional associations in the region. UNDP was ready to help, particularly in view of the potential for TCDC, especially between the Eastern and Central European and the Commonwealth of Independent States and the Latin America and the Caribbean regions.

177. RBEC planned to establish, within the current budget, a UNDP liaison unit in those countries in the region without UNDP offices (Czech Republic, Hungary and Slovakia). The concept of networking-for-development, enabled by the liaison units placed in each country, would soften the graduation process of those countries. The network would be coordinated and supported by an additional RBEC initiative, the Learning Centre, to be located in Bratislava, Slovakia, which would be engaged in outreach-support activities and organizing learning events. The Learning Centre would provide a cost-effective means of helping RBEC to manage programmes in countries without a fully-fledged office.

178. The CCFs for Kazakstan, Krygyzstan and Moldova reflected an active UNDP presence in each of those countries. Bilateral donors counted on the development services role UNDP could play on their behalf, as reflected in substantial cost-sharing in Krygyzstan and Moldova. The UNDP Resident Representative in Krygyzstan was present at the Executive Board. He had opened the UNDP Office in that country and had recently received national recognition as "Man of the Year".

179. Several delegations expressed their appreciation for the work of UNDP in the region, particularly in view of the low level of resources, both human and financial, available to RBEC to carry out its activities. The innovative and diverse approaches taken by RBEC in its work in the region, taking into account individual cases and needs, was much appreciated. It was hoped that within the context of the next budget strategy the region would receive increased resources in terms of staff and operational support. Particular attention was given to strengthening both headquarters and country offices in the region. The high degree of cost-sharing by bilateral donors and the Governments had contributed to the success of several programmes. Delegations supported the use of national execution and TCDC in the CCFs before the Board. Several speakers emphasized the importance of continued assistance to all countries in transition.

180. One delegation referred to the UNDP project to assist countries to gain membership in regional associations, noting the assistance needed by Governments for improved functioning and reorganization, as well as the need for increased competitiveness in global markets. For the countries associated with the European Union and those aspiring to that status, the question of adaptation to the Union's standards and mechanisms was vital. The same delegation suggested that some countries in transition would have to re-examine their external aid policies. The representative also noted that the report to the Executive Board on interregional cooperation to the annual session 1997 would be useful in evaluating achievements in the area of promoting innovative means of cooperation between all UNDP programme countries.

181. The representatives of the Czech Republic, Kazakstan, and Moldova took the floor to express appreciation for the ongoing cooperation with UNDP in their countries. The representative of Moldova asked for clarification of the inclusion of the line for "other resources" in the financial annex for the CCF of Moldova. He indicated that it was his understanding that the "other" resources would be incorporated into line 1.1.1, target for resource assignment from the core (TRAC) and utilized without any limitations. If the "other resources" line was to remain, TRAC line 1.1.1 would then, for all CCFs, appear without the "floor", with the remaining balance to be shown in the "other resources" line. He asked the Board to consider the issue at the second regular session 1997. That position was shared by another delegation who requested that all resource allocation criteria, including administrative budget allocations, be equal for all UNDP programme countries.

182. One delegation queried how UNDP had helped countries to join the European Union and the success of that activity. Another speaker, noting the many actors in the region, requested more information on the comparative advantage of UNDP. Some delegations asked for more specific references to gender-in-development activities while others supported more systematic and clear references to lessons learned in the frameworks. One delegation requested that UNDP include a list of socio-economic indicators on the front page of the CCF, as UNFPA did for its country programmes.

183. The Assistant Administrator, commenting on the CCFs considered at the current session, informed the Board that administrative costs and the number of posts per country office were on average only 50 per cent of those for comparable UNDP offices in other regions. Although exact figures were not

available, he noted that the percentage of costs for expatriate consultants and for equipment were generally low. With regard to assistance to countries intending to join the European Union, UNDP cooperation entailed training activities, which had been coordinated with the European Commission. He underlined that each country had a gender unit that promoted networking on a national basis. Evaluation and monitoring was taking place under the agreed terms of UNDP policies and procedures.

Country cooperation framework for Kyrgyzstan (DP/CCF/KYR/1)

184. The representative of Kyrgyzstan praised the work of UNDP in that country, where UNDP had played a principal coordinating role despite modest human resources. The cost-sharing of donors was appreciated. UNDP was asked to continue its assistance to relief following an earthquake in Krygyzstan.

185. A number of delegations cited the framework as a good example of its kind, particularly because it demonstrated concrete projects. One delegation requested more information on the scope of activity involving NGOs and about the carry-over of knowledge from the previous regime. UNDP was also asked about its relationship with other partners, including the World Bank. It was noted that the high rate of cost-sharing in Krygyzstan was attributable to the Government of the Netherlands.

186. The Resident Representative in Kyrgyzstan, in response to a query, stated that indicators on the country were available from the Ministry of Economics and could be annexed to the framework. He informed the Executive Board of the percentage breakdowns of the focus areas for the CCF: 24 per cent for poverty eradication; 12 per cent for job creation and private sector activities; 38 per cent for gender; and 16 per cent for the environment. The CCF reflected many inputs, including those of the private sector. UNDP worked in coordination with the United Nations bodies, including the World Bank and International Monetary Fund, and bilateral donors. UNDP cooperated with NGOs in several fields. He noted that there was substantial national capacity in the country.

First country cooperation framework for Slovakia (DP/CCF/SLO/1)

187. The representative of Slovakia appreciated the cooperation provided by UNDP which, despite the low level of resources, had contributed to the development of his country. His Government welcomed the new modalities of cooperation, as addressed by the Assistant Administrator.

188. Information was requested on the distribution of funding by sector, the level of Government contribution, and the rate of programme delivery during 1993-1996. The section on results and lessons learned was helpful in understanding the problems of the previous country programme, which had been too fragmented.

189. The Assistant Administrator explained that the high carry-over from the previous programming period resulted in part from the approval of an independence bonus in September 1996. He added that after the publication of the country cooperation framework, it appeared that delivery rates were actually

higher than shown. The framework would also be updated regarding the contribution of the Government.

190. The first country cooperation frameworks for Czech Republic (DP/CCF/CZE/1), Hungary (DP/CCF/HUN/1), Kazakstan (DP/CCF/KAZ/1), Kyrgysztan (DP/CCF/KYR/1), Moldova (DP/CCF/MOL/1) and Slovakia (DP/CCF/SLO/1) were approved on a no-objection basis.

Extension of the sixth country programme for Jordan (DP/CP/JOR/6/EXTENSION I)

Extension of the fifth country programme for Bahrain (DP/CP/BAH/5/EXTENSION I)

Extension of the sixth country programme for Algeria (DP/CP/ALG/6/EXTENSION I)

191. The President informed the Executive Board that it was within the prerogative of the Administrator to extend country programmes. The extensions of the sixth country programme for Jordan (DP/CP/JOR/6/EXTENSION I), the fifth country programme for Bahrain (DP/CP/BAH/5/EXTENSION I) and the sixth country programme for Algeria (DP/CP/ALG/6/EXTENSION I) were presented for the information of the Board.

192. The Assistant Administrator and Regional Director of the Regional Bureau for Arab States introduced the documents containing the extensions. He noted that the extensions were for one year, beginning 1 January 1997. CCFs for the countries would be submitted to the Executive Board in January 1998. In each of the three cases, there had been different reasons for extensions. In Bahrain, in the situation following the Gulf War, the Government had experienced difficulty in producing cost-sharing towards the programme. In Algeria, the extension had been prompted by the low delivery rate. In Jordan, the programming cycle was beirg harmonized with those of the Joint Consultative Group on Policy partners and reoriented to meet the provisions of the SHD mandate.

193. The Executive Board took note of the extensions of the sixth country programme for Jordan (DP/CP/JOR/6/EXTENSION I), the fifth country programme for Bahrain (DP/CP/BAH/5/EXTENSION I) and the sixth country programme for Algeria (DP/CP/ALG/6/EXTENSION I).

Assistance to Myanmar

194. The Assistant Administrator and Regional Director of the Regional Bureau for Asia and the Pacific introduced the note by the Administrator on assistance to Myanmar (DP/1997/4). The purpose of the note was to assess the extent to which assistance provided to Myanmar continued to meet the provisions of Executive Board decision 96/1 and Governing Council decision 93/21. He noted two main developments: the 15 projects of the Human Development Initiative (HDI) 1994-1996 had been completed and the ten projects comprising the Human Development Initiative Extension (HDI-E) (1996-1998) had been formulated and approved in strict accordance with Board decision 96/1. An independent team of experts had undertaken a mission to Myanmar in September 1996, in order to assess the results and achievements of the HDI and to see to what extent it continued to meet the provisions of relevant legislation. The assessment report

had been made available to Board members. The Assistant Administrator referred to the assessment and major findings of the report, which showed that the results, impact and lessons learned from the HDI were evident. Additional information had been provided at an informal briefing held on 14 January. The HDI-E projects would be implemented by United Nations specialized agencies. Greater efforts had been made to enhance cooperation with NGOs, both international and national, especially with regard to facilitating community participation at the grass-roots level. Concerns on monitoring and assessment had been taken into account and would continue to be addressed during implementation of HDI-E project activities. Local embassies continued to be fully briefed by the UNDP Resident Representative. Regular visits to HDI project sites would enable embassy officials to observe UNDP activities at the community and grass-roots level. Four field visits had been organized during 1996. Regular briefings for civil society organizations were organized by the Resident Representative. Critical humanitarian needs at the grass-roots level were being addressed.

195. Several delegations noted that their embassies in Yangon had commented favourably on the UNDP programme in Myanmar, citing in particular the framework provided by the HDI-E for grass-roots activities. UNDP was encouraged to explore a further expansion of its activities that would bring maximum benefit to local populations in Myanmar. The field visits were noted as very useful. One delegation asked about the total budget for the 15 projects; the ratio of international to national consultants; the amount of the budget devoted to benefiting grass-roots populations; how the townships for UNDP projects had been chosen; and the experience of UNDP in maintaining political neutrality. Another delegation sought information on whether there were problems in monitoring the human development level in certain states in Myanmar. Several delegations underlined the importance attached to monitoring of UNDP activities in Myanmar.

196. One delegation, on behalf of another, and also supported by another, cited the continued deterioration of human rights in Myanmar. It was essential that the provisions of General Assembly resolution 51/117 be upheld. UNDP was encouraged to adhere to Governing Council decision 93/21 and to seek the broadest possible range of contacts in the country, including opposition leaders, in order to broaden the scope of its activity. More information on cooperation with NGOs was sought. Another delegation encouraged UNDP to cooperate with the United Nations in its activities in Myanmar.

197. The Resident Representative in Myanmar stated that UNDP had complied with the guidelines and criteria legislated by the Executive Board. Monitoring and evaluation remained important aspects of the programme. UNDP intended to continue monitoring the impact of its programme at the grass-roots level and in the townships as well as the HDI-E programme as a whole. At the township level, a large cadre of national professionals would be recruited by UNDP and be solely accountable to UNDP. The key goals of the HDI support project were to ensure development and to ensure that the needs of the poorest people were met. The HDI provided for two full-time monitoring and evaluation officers accountable solely to UNDP. More than $50 million of the approved $52.076 million had been programmed. Covered within that amount was funding for primary health care, water supply and sanitation, HIV/AIDS, basic education, sustainable livelihoods, and the HDI support project, all targeted towards the poor. National personnel

were the largest group employed by the HDI-E project. UNDP was cooperating with national and international NGOs, an activity that would be enhanced in the future.

198. The Assistant Administrator said more information would be provided as needed. He confirmed that UNDP and the HDI-E would adhere to the decisions of the Executive Board and target poverty eradication, grass-roots impact and the involvement of NGOs and would uphold the resolutions of the General Assembly. National officers were recruited by UNDP and were accountable to UNDP.

199. The Executive Board took note of the note of the Administrator on assistance to Myanmar (DP/1997/4).

VII. FINANCIAL, BUDGETARY AND ADMINISTRATIVE MATTERS

Audit reports: follow-up to recommendations of the report of the Board of Auditors

200. The Assistant Administrator and Director of the Bureau for Finance and Administration (BFA) brought to the attention of the Executive Board the report of the Board of Auditors for the biennium 1994-1995 (A/51/5/Add.1) and introduced the report of the Administrator on the follow-up to recommendations of the report of the Board of Auditors (DP/1997/3). He noted that the report of the Board of Auditors had been considered in November 1996 by the Fifth Committee at its fifty-first session. At that time, UNDP had presented, through the Secretary-General and ACABQ, a status report on the implementation of the recommendations of the Board of Auditors (A/51/488/Add.2). The report of ACABQ was contained in document A/51/533. The resolution on the matter had been deferred until the resumed session of the General Assembly. The Assistant Administrator expressed his appreciation to the Board of Auditors, who had thoroughly reviewed the management and financial systems of UNDP and had engaged in an open and constructive dialogue with UNDP during the exercise. UNDP placed the highest priority on the implementation of the recommendations of the Board of Auditors and had already taken steps to follow up on the recommendations in the report.

201. The Assistant Administrator addressed the main recommendations of the Board of Auditors and highlighted the actions taken to date. He noted with concern that the Board of Auditors had qualified its opinion on UNDP financial statements because of the outstanding audit certificates for national execution expenditures. That issue had been brought to the attention of recipient Governments. He informed the Executive Board that UNDP had initiated a review of the current audit strategy of national execution in consultation with the Board of Auditors and expected to propose to the Board a revision to the relevant UNDP Financial Regulations and Rules at the third regular session 1997. He noted that UNDP was in the process of finalizing a document proposing a re-definition of the objectives and strategy for national execution, including revised guidelines and procedures. A progress report would be submitted to the Board at its second regular session 1997. A revised monitoring and evaluation system, in particular to address national execution, including revised guiding principles, was being prepared. The revised guidelines on national execution

would facilitate the identification of gaps in government capacity in a more effective way. With regard to internal audit functions, the Assistant Administrator noted that UNDP had been able to expand audit coverage by allocating significant additional resources for the contracting of audit services to major international audit firms and the establishment of two regional service centres to service Africa and Asia and the Pacific. High priority had been placed on the internal audit function, including its staffing level, within the context of the change management process. Recommendations regarding the Reserve for Field Accommodation would be dealt with in the discussion of that item.

202. The Director of External Audit, United Kingdom, thanked the Assistant Administrator for his remarks and noted the constructive working relationship that existed between UNDP and the Board of Auditors.

203. Several delegations referred to the recommendations concerning national execution, underlining the need to assess government capacity in that regard and to develop capacity assessment guidelines for its use. Country offices must be able to monitor the modality adequately. One delegation noted the importance of Governments having a role in developing projects and standards for national execution.

204. One delegation also requested additional information on the status of the Programme and Projects Manual, the work measurement exercises, the review of funds mandates, and the strategy and business plan of the United Nations Development Fund for Women. That delegation expressed concern at the level of unliquidated obligations as well as the size of the write-off of non-expendable property. That delegation also expressed concern that four trust funds had surplus expenditures, in other words, expenditure exceeded income. Most significant were the United Nations Capital Development Fund (UNCDF) and the Office to Combat Desertification and Drought (UNSO). The other two trust funds were UNIFEM and the United Nations Fund for Science and Technology for Development (UNFSTD).

205. The need for internal audit functions to be properly and adequately staffed was emphasized. The recommendation to eliminate non-audit functions from the work of the Division for Audit and Management Review (DAMR) was supported. One delegation emphasized the need for enhanced audit coverage and focus. One delegation was encouraged that DAMR now had a five-year plan but remained concerned about improving the quality of the audits, audit documentation and audit reports.

206. One speaker questioned the impact of receiving repeated recommendations by the Board of Auditors. Another supported more frequent discussions of the reports of the Board of Auditors. One delegation noted that the Board of Auditors report highlighted the need to improve oversight, accountability and management in general in addition to the internal audit function. After all, audits and investigations were the last defense in internal controls and oversight. Proper systems and management were key to adequate stewardship of resources. Timely and adequate follow-up to and implementation of findings and recommendations was also important.

207. The Director of External Audit, United Kingdom, stated that recommendations that had not been implemented were repeated in subsequent reports of the Board of Auditors. He noted that ACABQ had requested the Board of Auditors to draw out areas where further action was required.

208. The Assistant Administrator underlined the rapid rise in national execution and reiterated that the issue would be examined in depth at the second regular session 1997. He noted that DAMR had not been subject to staff reductions during the current biennium and its needs would be closely examined in the development of the budget strategy for 1998-1999. He also noted that it would be feasible to discuss reports of the Board of Auditors at the first regular session each year. With regard to the elimination of non-audit functions in DAMR, the Assistant Administrator indicated that the transfer of such functions to the Division of Operational Policies and Procedures in the Bureau for Policy and Programme Support would be completed by February 1997.

209. The Executive Board approved the following decision:

97/3. UNDP: Audit reports

The Executive Board

1. Takes note of the comments made by the United Nations Development Programme in document DP/1997/3 in response to the recommendations made in the report of the United Nations Board of Auditors for the biennium 1994-1995 (A/51/5/Add.1);

2. Requests the secretariat to provide the Executive Board, at its first regular session 1998, with an updated overview of the implementation of the recommendations of the Board of Auditors and an updated timetable indicating the dates when follow-up action will have been completed in the areas that need to be addressed, namely, audit of projects, reserve for field accommodations, national execution, budgetary matters, management of funds, such as the United Nations Capital Development Fund and the United Nations Development Fund for Women, and internal audit;

3. Requests the secretariat to provide an update on the progress achieved in the implementation of the recommendations of the auditors at the first regular session of the Executive Board each year, as a matter of routine, under the agenda item "Financial, budgetary and administrative matters".

16 January 1997

Implementation of decision 96/40 on management, accountability and the Reserve for Field Accommodation

210. The Administrator reported to the Executive Board, as requested at the third regular session 1996, on issues relating to the Reserve for Field Accommodation (RFA). His statement complemented the information provided in a conference room paper (DP/1997/CRP.3), which included the status of activity

through 10 January 1997. He informed the Board that a significant level of effort had been made towards completing the investigation of matters relating to the Reserve and towards initiating management accountability measures. An investigation was nearing completion, and UNDP had made progress in terms of identification of what had happened and who in UNDP was responsible. The need for due process for UNDP staff prevented the disclosure of detailed information on the mismanagement or misconduct of staff at the present time. Summaries of the reports on internal accountability and on the external investigation would be made available to the Board. The investigation was confirming that there had been serious breakdowns in internal controls and management oversight, which had resulted in UNDP not obtaining value for money in the construction of housing and common premises. The Administrator pledged his commitment to determine the costs to UNDP and seek recovery, wherever possible. UNDP would not, however, be in a position to make the determination for some time.

211. The Administrator noted that 18 present and former staff members, including several senior managers, were under review and could be considered for accountability and/or disciplinary measures. Two of those staff members had been suspended pending charges that carried with them the possibility of maximum sanctions should the allegations be confirmed in the disciplinary process. Financial recovery could also be considered. The remaining cases would be brought to the next stage in the coming weeks. The Administrator expressed his full personal commitment to bringing all matters to a timely and complete resolution. He highlighted his decision to assign the management of the Reserve activities on a temporary basis to the Deputy Director of the Division for Administrative and Information Services. He noted that UNDP was moving forward with the disposal of housing that was no longer needed. With regard to internal controls, he reported that the transactions relating to the Reserve were being made in a tighter framework of checks and balances. A new policy and control unit within the Division of Finance was being established. UNDP had kept the members of the Joint Consultative Group on Policy (JCGP) and the Under-Secretary-General of the Office of Internal Oversight Services informed of developments regarding the Reserve. He assured the Executive Board that all actions would be pursued to completion.

212. Several delegations took the floor to thank the Administrator for his remarks and for the action UNDP was taking with regard to the situation. In particular, the personal pledges and commitments expressed by the Administrator to taking action with regard to the Reserve were greatly appreciated. Some delegations also expressed their appreciation to the Assistant Administrator and Director, BFA. The need to take swift action and to keep the Executive Board informed of all developments was underlined. One delegation asked how long new common premises projects would be put on hold.

213. One delegation was concerned that too much time had elapsed before UNDP had addressed the root causes of the problem. In its view, if the situation was to be rectified, several important steps needed to be taken. Those steps included the need to have comprehensive measures in place and understood by all relevant staff members and other personnel to prevent any overpayments from occurring in the future. That meant that before any funds were disbursed, all necessary and appropriate expenditures relating to housing and common premises must be verified. In the case of JCGP partners, more formal arrangements must exist to

ensure adequate involvement in the planning and monitoring of engineering requirements. With regard to financial accounting procedures, the approach of UNDP to segregate assets relating to housing from those relating to common premises was commendable. Written procedures needed to be in place to delineate clearly recurring maintenance expenses from rehabilitation costs, an element that would enhance the clarity and transparency of UNDP financial statements. UNDP must also retain individuals with the relevant expertise in managing properties, offer training, as appropriate, and make available the necessary resources. The decision not to construct or purchase housing premises was endorsed. It was regretted that UNDP was unlikely to recover fully its initial investment. The delegation looked forward to reviewing at the second regular session the results of the investigation undertaken by DAMR. The report should include actions taken to address systemic problems relating to the Reserve. It was also hoped that the Board of Auditors would continue to monitor the situation, and if necessary, issue an interim report. The delegation indicated that it might request the engagement of others in reviewing and commenting on the adequacy of remedial actions taken by UNDP.

214. The Assistant Administrator and Director of the Bureau for Finance and Administration emphasized the great importance that UNDP attached to this matter, including the need for external and internal actions undertaken. UNDP was examining all the issues, including systemic factors, certifying and approval functions, establishment of budgets and obligations, and accountability. Recurrence of a similar situation would be avoided. He noted that the JCGP members had been briefed in detail and explained that future agreements on common premises would have to be clear to all parties. A professional capacity to manage joint projects was needed. Construction of new premises would be a last resort.

215. The Director, DAMR, informed the Executive Board that work was being undertaken to gather as much information as possible as swiftly as possible.

216. The President noted the appreciation of the Bureau of the Executive Board for the actions undertaken and determination of UNDP to correct the situation.

217. The Executive Board took note of the information presented in the Administrator's oral report and in the conference room paper (DP/1997/CRP.3).

Progress report on the implementation of an accountability framework

218. The Associate Administrator gave an oral progress report on the implementation of an accountability framework, as requested at the third regular session 1996. He explained that much of the work on the accountability framework was being undertaken within the change management process. The key components of the framework were establishment and communication of mandate, mission and goals; shared values; competencies; and a system for monitoring and learning. Overlaying the key components would be a control and risk self-assessment model focusing on operational objectives, related policies and acceptable risks. The approach would reduce reliance upon manuals, directives and instructions. Two priority considerations were governance issues in relation to the Executive Board, and the accountability performance contracts between the Administrator and senior managers, for which there would be

training. Clear operational objectives and goals for UNDP would be communicated. UNDP had developed a draft statement of values and guiding principles based on a global survey of all staff in 1996. The statement, to be communicated throughout UNDP in the early part of 1997, would form the cornerstone of an ethics programme that would include a code of ethics and an infrastructure to support staff action and provide r is and sanctions based on ethical conduct.

219. Other elements of the framework included the development of resident coordinator competencies and performance appraisal criteria and the refinement of standard competency definitions for all staff functions. An executive information management system prototype had been developed and the new Financial Information Management system was being implemented in early 1997. Two initiatives had been taken with regard to monitoring and learning, including the Management Review/Oversight Committee and the strengthening and decentralization of the Division for Audit and Management Review (DAMR). The change management projects would be reviewing and implementing the recommendations of the final report from consultants, who had reviewed subsystems in UNDP that had an impact on accountability.

220. Information was sought on the proposals regarding ethics, on how headquarters activities would be audited with the decentralization of DAMR and on how situations such as that relating to the Reserve for Field Accommodation could be avoided. One delegation emphasized the need for clear rules to guide staff. One delegation noted that in terms of the RFA, it seemed that the system was not endorsed, did not work or was unclear. The system must be clear on what was expected of each function and person so that one could measure progress in achieving the desired results.

221. The Associate Administrator said that ethical questions would be examined in the context of the overall accountability framework. Its aim was to provide a higher system of values, one developed in collaboration with staff members. He noted that DAMR would not be completely decentralized. Some resources would be placed in regional centres to enhance their oversight capability. With regard to the RFA, the rules had been clear, but had not been followed, and there had been no alarm system in place to warn of the problem. The proposed financial control unit would create an early warning system. DAMR would move more to oversight and management reviews, with the aim of bringing out weaknesses in control systems at an earlier stage.

222. The Assistant Administrator and Director of the Bureau for Finance and Administration noted the lack of checks and balances in the RFA situation.

223. The Director, DAMR, stated that the approach would focus on control and risk assessment. The four planned regional service centres would be more cost-effective and closer to the resources to be delivered. The Director, DAMR, stated that DAMR would conduct more audits of headquarters units (as recommended by the Board of Auditors).

224. The Executive Board took note of the oral progress report on the implementation of an accountability framework.

Cost segments at UNDP headquarters

225. The Assistant Administrator and Director, BFA, informed the Executive Board that additional information on cost segments at UNDP headquarters, requested at the third regular session 1996, was contained in a conference room paper (DP/1997/CRP.4).

226. Questions were raised about the information contained in the paper, including about the number of total staff costs and how the cost of rent at headquarters in New York would compare with rental costs in other cities having a United Nations presence. One delegation suggested that the staff of UNDP could be further decentralized to other locations, and looked forward to more information in connection with the change management process. Further information on headquarters costs could be included in the annual information on the budget. The information provided would allow for enhanced oversight of administrative costs, including headquarters costs. Some concern was expressed over the trend of increased expenditures and UNDP was encouraged to reduce costs in the context of the next budget biennium. One delegation, noting the increased costs in remuneration despite decreased numbers of core staff, requested an outline with information from 1990 on the number of staff, both at headquarters and in country offices, including those with different types of contracts. It was noted that with decreasing core contributions, UNDP should continue further downsizing of staff at headquarters. Another delegation underlined the need for structures in recipient countries to be strengthened despite reduced overall expenditure. It was suggested that a comprehensive discussion on headquarters costs take place at the annual session. One delegation emphasized that the revised budget estimates for the 1998-1999 biennium should allow better oversight by the Executive Board of administrative costs, including headquarters costs. That delegation also expressed concern that headquarters administrative costs had increased significantly between the 1990-1991 biennium and the 1992-1993 biennium and had not subsequently declined. That delegation expressed appreciation for this trend data and looked forward to further progress in minimizing administrative expenses not just at Headquarters but throughout UNDP.

227. With regard to location of UNDP headquarters, one delegation preferred that it remain in New York. Another delegation referred to the availability of Bonn as a location for UNDP headquarters.

228. One delegation encouraged the Executive Board not to continue to request information already available in annual financial documents.

229. The Assistant Administrator noted that the information on cost segments would be included in the documentation for the discussion of the biennial budget. Related questions, including those on decentralization, would also be taken up in the context of the change management process.

230. The Director, Budget Division, noted that if the two components of core and non-core were taken together, the staff reduction would be 25 per cent. With regard to rental costs, the information provided reflected existing rental agreements which were being re-negotiated. UNDP expected a substantial reduction in rent, to below the level of 1990-1991, in the next biennium. He

also noted that there was a provision in the biennial budget under common staff costs for reimbursement of income taxes. Total salary costs had remained more or less the same over the past six years, while unit costs had increased. Other factors included inflation, training programmes, and the costs of separation packages. Information on trends would be included in the context of the overall biennial budget.

231. The President noted that the issue would have to be examined more thoroughly, particularly in light of the fact that some countries were offering rent-free premises. The limited resources available to UNDP should be used at the country level.

232. The Executive Board took note of the information provided.

VIII. UNITED NATIONS DEVELOPMENT FUND FOR WOMEN

233. The Associate Administrator introduced the item, stating that the advice and guidance of the Executive Board was sought on three issues relating to the United Nations Development Fund for Women (UNIFEM): the partial funding modality; the external evaluation of UNIFEM; and the Fund's strategy and business plan. He informed the Board that the resource situation of UNIFEM was stable, with an increase in its overall income level. The pledging conference held in November 1996 had resulted in $6.4 million in pledges from 28 donors, an increase of $.674 million over 1996 pledges. In order to make the best use of the money as it was received, UNIFEM would need to revert to a partial funding modality, so that multi-year programmes and projects could be planned and approved in their entirety. The proposed methodology for partial funding was explained in a conference room paper (DP/1997/CRP.5) before the Board. An informal note providing the response of UNIFEM to the recommendations contained in the external evaluation of the Fund was also made available to the Board. The business plan of UNIFEM would be useful as a guide to the Fund's work over the following three years. He also informed the Board that, pursuant to the discussions at the informal sessions of the Board in December 1996, UNIFEM had obtained an opinion from the Office of Legal Affairs to the effect that it had authority within its existing mandates to work in the countries of Eastern and Central Europe and the Commonwealth of Independent States.

234. The UNIFEM Director addressed the Executive Board on the issues before the Board relating to UNIFEM. She underlined the close collaboration with the UNDP Division of Finance in developing a proposed modality for the partial funding system in UNIFEM. The Fund had been able to respond to several of the recommendations in the external evaluation report, especially those relating to programme focus and management. She outlined the elements of the UNIFEM business plan, which would include the UNIFEM mission, the nature of UNIFEM business, new opportunities and challenges in the external environment, strengths and needs in the UNIFEM internal environment, and management for results, including strategic programming, resource utilization, and requirements. The Director emphasized that UNIFEM served as an important entity in the United Nations for a very crucial constituency. The Fund had to be effectively managed with adequate resources in order to fulfil its mandate of economic and political empowerment of women and direct its resources to the

needs and concerns of women. The Fund would direct its resources to bring about systemic change that would lead to that empowerment, pilot new approaches that could be replicated on a wider scale, test new policy options for gender equality, and provide empirical grounding for policy development.

235. Several speakers, including one on behalf of the African Group, and another on behalf of the Asian Group, and supported by one other delegation, praised the work of UNIFEM in helping women in developing countries. The Fund should be in a position to continue its activities and to follow up the Platform of Action of the Fourth World Conference on Women. UNIFEM had been sufficiently scrutinized and had demonstrated that it maintained a close relationship with the Executive Board.

236. Many delegations supported the approval of the partial funding system. However, some speakers would have preferred to have a full discussion on the follow-up to the recommendations of the evaluation of UNIFEM before having to decide whether to approve partial funding. One delegation requested information comparing the operational reserve levels between the former and the proposed systems. A discussion of the follow-up to the evaluation was requested at the second regular session 1997. One delegation stated that new projects should be implemented in accordance with the business plan.

237. The UNIFEM Director explained that approval of the partial funding modality would be of great benefit to the ability of UNIFEM to programme its resources. She noted that UNIFEM was pleased to work with the Executive Board in common ownership of the Fund's activities. Resources would be used for catalytic work for the good of women. A comprehensive business plan and strategy for UNIFEM would be presented to the annual session 1997.

238. The Deputy Director of UNIFEM noted that UNIFEM would be able to fund new activities under the partial funding modality. The Director, DOF, said the arrangement was conservative and practical and that risk management had been considered.

239. Several delegations underlined the need for UNIFEM to work in areas of its comparative advantage, citing in particular its work as a catalyst for other United Nations organizations to promote gender mainstreaming and its advocacy for the political and economic empowerment of women. One delegation underlined the severe implications of the feminization of poverty and the need for women to have access to food. In that regard, UNIFEM should have an active role in follow-up to the World Food Summit.

240. Wide support was expressed for the Fund's extending its work to Eastern and Central Europe and the Commonwealth of Independent States. One speaker, on behalf of the Central Asian States, hoped that UNIFEM would initiate activities in poverty eradication to benefit women in that region. Another speaker stated that UNIFEM should take measures to help women who had refugee status.

241. The Executive Board approved the following decision:

97/4. United Nations Development Fund for Women

The Executive Board

1. Takes note of the conference room paper on the applicability of a partial funding system to the United Nations Development Fund for Women (DP/1997/CRP.5), submitted in response to Executive Board decision 96/43;

2. Endorses the methodology for determining project approval and operational reserve levels for the United Nations Development Fund for Women under the partial funding modality, as set out in the annex to the present decision, and approves, on a provisional basis, its use for the Fund, beginning in 1997, and its continuation on a no-objection basis, pending the discussion of the response to the evaluation of the Fund;

3. Decides that an appropriate monitoring mechanism should be established by the United Nations Development Fund for Women in consultation with the United Nations Development Programme and that the Fund should report on the functioning of the partial funding modality in the annual financial report of the United Nations Development Programme and its administered funds, to be presented during each third regular session;

4. Takes note of the response provided by the United Nations Development Fund for Women to the recommendations of the Fund's external evaluation, as reflected in the informal note provided by the Fund during the current session and decides that the paper should be distributed in the working languages of the Executive Board for discussion at the second regular session 1997, bearing in mind paragraph 3 of Board decision 96/8 regarding the rules for the submission of documentation;

5. Also takes note of the progress being made by the United Nations Development Fund for Women in developing a strategy and business plan, as reflected in the oral report of the Executive Director to the Board;

6. Takes further note of the recent finding that the United Nations Development Fund for Women may work in Eastern Europe, Central Europe and the Commonwealth of Independent States, within the existing legislation, and requests the Fund to take into consideration the finding in the context of its business plan and strategy to be presented to the annual session 1997 of the Board, bearing in mind that due consideration should be given to activities in the least developed countries and low-income countries, particularly in Africa, as expressed in Executive Board decision 96/43.

17 January 1997

Annex

PROPOSED PARTIAL FUNDING SYSTEM FOR UNITED NATIONS DEVELOPMENT FUND FOR WOMEN

The following variables would be used in the formulae to determine programme approval and operational reserve levels:

(a) Estimated income to general resources, calculated on the basis of the pledging conference results and direct consultation with donors (I);

(b) Balance of general resources carried over from the previous year (B);

(c) Administrative budget. The estimate of the next three years will be by default equal to three times the current year. UNIFEM management will submit any adjustments from that estimate to UNDP for approval (AB);

(d) Budgets of ongoing projects rephased from previous years into the present year, plus budgets of ongoing projects for the year in question (OPB);

(e) Delivery rate, i.e., estimated proportion of current year approved budgets actually disbursed during the year (D).

1. The maximum approval level (AL) for programming over a three-year period will be set in December of each year, using a conservative estimate of income realization for the next three years, minus administrative costs for that same period. A very conservative estimate of income to be realized for the first year would be equal to the estimated income for that year, calculated on the basis of the pledging conference results and direct consultation with donors. The estimate for the second year would be equal to 50 per cent of the estimated income of the first year while the estimate for the third year would be equal to 25 per cent of the estimated income of the first year (i.e., 50 per cent of the estimate for the previous year).

$$AL = (1+0.5+0.25) \times I-AB$$

If the income stream were to become more diverse and hence less dependent on a small group of donors, the amount of resources in future years that could be programmed could be increased from the present coefficients for the second and third years. The present levels represent a very conservative approach, consistent with the existing characteristics of the donor base. As conditions change, UNIFEM management, in consultation with Division of Finance, might reconsider the income estimates to be used, and present them to the Executive Board for consideration.

2. The amount available for total new approvals over the programme period is obtained by subtracting the total value of the budgets of ongoing projects for present and future years from the maximum approval level. The operational reserve (OR) would be set at the annual average expenditure over the programming

period, i.e., one third of the maximum programme approval level times the estimated delivery rate.

$$OR = AL/3 \times D$$

3. The programme expenditure ceiling (EC) for the current year would be set so as not to exceed the total estimated resources available for that year (balance of general resources brought forward from the previous year plus estimated income), minus administrative costs. As the operational reserve level will fluctuate with changes in the approval levels, any additions or reductions to the reserve must also be taken into account in determining the programme expenditure ceiling. This ceiling would therefore be calculated as:

$$EC = B + I - AB +/- \text{Changes to the OR}$$

The annual ceiling for new project budgets approvals (AC) in the present year is set on the basis of this expenditure ceiling by:

(a) Subtracting the budgets of ongoing projects for the current year, including amounts rephased from the previous year (OPB); and

(b) Taking into account the estimated delivery rate of UNIFEM (80 per cent) and consequently adjusting the project budget approval ceiling upwards to allow as much programming as possible, without exceeding available resources.

$$AC = (1/D \times EC) - OPB$$

4. The UNIFEM operational reserve will serve two main purposes: (a) to cover any short-term shortfalls between expenditures and liquidity from month to month and (b) to provide a hedge against downward income fluctuations from year to year. UNIFEM will monitor the operational reserve and report on it quarterly to the Office of the Administrator and Director of the Bureau for Finance and Administration. If it appears that the level of the reserve cannot be maintained at the close of the year, the Administrator will inform the Executive Board, stating the reasons justifying the use of the reserve and the steps that UNIFEM intends to take to address the problem. The functioning of the partial funding system, including the operational reserve level, will be the subject of a management review by UNIFEM and DOF every December. The appropriate levels for the coming years will be determined at that time.

IX. OTHER MATTERS

Follow-up to Economic and Social Council resolution 95/56

242. The Director of the Emergency Response Division (ERD), Office of United Nations System Support and Services (OUNS), introduced the conference room paper on action taken by UNDP in follow-up to Economic and Social Council resolution 95/56 (DP/1997/CRP.6). He informed the Executive Board that UNDP had been working closely with the Inter-Agency Standing Committee (IASC), the Consultative Committee on Programme and Operational Questions (CCPOQ), and the

Department for Humanitarian Affairs (DHA) in preparing the report of the Secretary-General on the follow-up to resolution 96/56. The ERD had been working both on the strengthening of coordination of emergency humanitarian assistance and the contribution of UNDP target for resource assignment from the core (TRAC) line 1.1.3 under the successor programming arrangements. He underlined the commitment of UNDP to the role of DHA as coordinator of humanitarian relief in the United Nations system, and noted that UNDP had financed most of the DHA humanitarian coordinators, as they were in most cases also resident coordinators. The work of UNDP in development and its support to the resident coordinator function were highly relevant in the context of humanitarian activities. The resident and humanitarian coordinator functions were critical to the bridging of relief and development activities.

243. The Director then described the elements of the special development challenges facing UNDP in addressing the three major issues that existed in most crisis contexts: displaced persons, de-mining and demobilization. He noted that under TRAC line 1.1.3, 19 special development initiatives were under way and another 15 were near finalization. Many were essential bridging projects, which helped to bring together relief and development, and catalytic in that they helped to plan for and attract resources. The strategic framework into which the projects would be included required leadership from both the resident coordinator and the humanitarian coordinator, enabling all partners, both national and international, to have a frame of reference for their respective actions. The contributions from TRAC 1.1.3 for developing strategic frameworks were therefore devoted to fostering the collaborative responses of the United Nations system and its partners. Within those frameworks, better bridging of relief and development could be facilitated through expanded consolidated appeals, which UNDP and DHA had jointly proposed for review by IASC and other inter-agency bodies. In September 1996, CCPOQ had endorsed a plan for the United Nations system's activities in post-conflict recovery, which was consistent with TRAC 1.1.3 support for development of strategic frameworks. Together with DHA, UNDP was organizing a meeting of resident coordinators and humanitarian coordinators from countries in special circumstances in March 1997 in order to strengthen United Nations system coordination and evaluate lessons learned.

244. In an initial exchange of views following the presentation of the conference room paper, several delegations commented that the paper could have elaborated better the different roles of UNDP and DHA in crisis situations and clarified the role and responsibilities of UNDP in particular. The paper should have set out a clear, well-defined strategy for UNDP in emergency situations. More information on the sharing of responsibilities during a crisis was sought, in particular with regard to uprooted populations. It was pointed out that the respective roles of other United Nations agencies were not cited in the paper. Several delegations requested examples of cases of cooperation among the respective organizations and information on how UNDP served in a coordinating role at the country level. One delegation requested inclusion of references to activities in institutional capacity-building and in post-conflict situations.

245. The Director, ERD, noted that IACM would review the expanded Inter-Agency Consolidated Appeals Process in January 1997. Support from TRAC line 1.1.3 had been in operation from the beginning of 1997, with programming beginning in

1996. The pipeline projects had supported elections and de-mining, among other activities. UNDP was working with many partners, including the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), the United Nations Children's Fund, the World Food Programme and NGOs. He drew the attention of the Executive Board to the UNDP booklet "Building Bridges Between Relief and Development".

246. At the resumed discussion of the item, the Associate Administrator expressed regret that UNDP had not consulted enough with the Executive Board prior to the discussion of the item. A consultative process could have helped to avoid the misunderstandings that had arisen and could have helped to highlight the role of UNDP in emergencies. While the paper had not explained it thoroughly enough, he underlined the important relationships UNDP had in working with other organizations, including in the past in such operations as the Cambodia Resettlement and Reintegration Programme (CARERE) and through area development schemes in Sudan, in which internally displaced persons were resettled. In Rwanda, funding from TRAC line 1.1.3 was being utilized for the development of a strategic inter-agency framework with development partners in that country. There were many examples of similar activities where UNDP had collaborated with its partners in IASC.

247. The Director, ERD, noted that in the paper UNDP had not wished to appear to define the role of other organizations or to encroach on DHA responsibilities in preparing the report to the Economic and Social Council. He anticipated receiving a timetable from DHA for the reporting process. The conference room paper had underlined the need for all actors to strengthen coordination. The resident coordinator system, supported by UNDP, took the lead responsibility, with the resident coordinator normally serving as the humanitarian coordinator. He noted that the strategic framework concept was beginning to find momentum. With regard to resource mobilization, the expanded Consolidated Appeals Process, agreed to by both the Under-Secretary-General of DHA and the Administrator, would enhance the resource mobilization process. With regard to training, UNDP was a pioneer in the disaster management training programme for resident coordinators, now supported through TRAC line 1.1.3. Secon ent programmes were useful in training staff of different organizations. With regard to specific cooperation with other United Nations organizations, he noted that UNDP had worked closely with the World Bank in Liberia and Rwanda in post-conflict situations, and was in the final stages of concluding a memorandum of understanding with UNHCR.

248. One delegation, also on behalf of another, thanked the Associate Administrator for the examples of cooperation in post-conflict situations, and the Director, ERD, for his response to the questions posed by delegations at the earlier meeting. He underlined that the conference room paper could have demonstrated that UNDP was taking greater initiatives in responding to Economic and Social Council resolution 95/56, and could also have elaborated proposals to improve coordination on humanitarian assistance. He noted that the Executive Board was aware of the sensitivities regarding the roles of different entities. The delegation, supported by other speakers, requested that a revised conference room paper be presented at the second regular session 1997.

249. One delegation, on behalf of the African group, cited the key role of UNDP in post-conflict situations, especially in Africa, including the Great Lakes region, and in the aftermath of natural disasters. The group would welcome the strengthening of the coordination function, especially with regard to rehabilitation.

250. One delegation, also on behalf of another, stated that it would have been useful if the information provided orally had been included in the written material. While the paper addressed some of the issues regarding humanitarian operations, it lacked a clear and well-defined strategy and did not explain adequately the capacities of UNDP. More information on the role of UNDP regarding displaced persons was sought. More concrete examples from the field and more analysis regarding coordination were needed. The role of government counterparts and the level of delegation between headquarters and the field needed to be clearly spelled out. The United Nations system should have a single strategy in each country. Another delegation emphasized the timeliness of the discussions on the strengthening of humanitarian assistance within the United Nations system. The efforts to improve the division of labour among the organizations was welcomed. The delegation stated that the UNDP presence in countries in post-conflict situations was useful, as were its relations with civil society. While UNDP lacked the resources for involvement in physical activities, it could work with administrative infrastructures and rehabilitation of legal systems, including through links with the World Bank. Aspects of the continuum should be taken into account at an early stage. Joint evaluations would be welcomed.

251. The Director, ERD, responded that UNDP had a bifurcate role: narrow interventions in humanitarian situations and a custodial role in managing the resident coordinator system. He pointed out that often the resident representative, as humanitarian coordinator, had reporting lines to several people within the United Nations system. He noted that de-mining, demobilization and working with displaced persons were activities with both a relief phase and a development phase. He agreed that a revised paper would be presented to the Executive Board at its second regular session.

252. The Chief of the Office of the Under-Secretary-General, Department of Humanitarian Affairs (DHA), addressed the Executive Board and noted that an informal paper had been circulated on follow-up to Economic and Social Council decision 95/56 within IASC. He gave a short briefing on the issues of coordination, resource mobilization and the linkages between relief and development. He underlined the support of DHA for strengthening the resident coordinator system, which needed to be reinforced in order to enable the fulfilment of DHA functions. The Department had the responsibility for sectoral coordination as well as designating organizations for common services within IASC, with work in the Great Lakes region a recent example. Availability of resources under UNDP TRAC line 1.1.3 was welcomed, including as funding for transitional interventions. The sub-group on resource mobilization had made progress, including with regard to the Consolidated Appeals Process (CAP). He noted that the IASC sub-working group would also soon be considering the UNDP-DHA proposal for an "expanded CAP", which addressed the requirements of the transitional phase where both relief and recovery activities were crucial. DHA was firmly committed to promoting an inter-agency agreement on such a mechanism.

Relief should be delivered in the context of long-term recovery, or relief with development, as opposed to relief to development. That represented a shift in the paradigm and agreement on three principles: that the objectives process of recovery should start during the emergency, not at the end; that the objectives included in the response to the emergency begin to lay the foundation to recovery; and that recovery should be based on the needs of people in the community concerned. It was expected that the review by the Economic and Social Council would be rewarding and lead to a positive culture of cooperation. He noted that the IASC sub-working group would also soon be considering the UNDP-DHA proposal for the expanded CAP, addressing the requirements of the transitional phase, where both relief and recovery activities were crucial.

253. One delegation asked that the Geneva office of UNDP be strengthened in the area and that the United Nations Office of Project Services open an office in Geneva. Several delegations looked forward to discussion of the paper in a broader context at the Economic and Social Council. One speaker noted that the approach of UNDP seemed too ambitious, with proposals that could go beyond resolution 95/56. Another underlined the comparative advantage of UNDP through its presence in programme countries, and its ability to address the development dimension at all stages. That delegation questioned whether it would be feasible to provide relief with development.

254. With regard to what was expected in the revised paper for the second regular session, one delegation suggested that in addition to the comments made by delegations at the present session, UNDP should keep in mind the annex to Economic and Social Council resolution 95/56, which listed issues set out for consideration by Executive Boards, including operational responsibilities, gaps, financial and operational capacities, strategies, staff development, reporting on and evaluation of programmes, and resources. It would be useful to link the work of the IASC subsidiary working groups and the overall thinking within the system. Another delegation emphasized the need to focus on the role of UNDP within the United Nations system as a whole as well as its relationship with DHA. UNDP was a valuable tool in humanitarian assistance within the operational activities area and could play a more strategic role in prevention. One speaker encouraged UNDP to begin the informal consultation process on the revised conference room paper as early as possible.

255. The Director, ERD, confirmed that the comments made by delegations would be reflected in the revised conference room paper and that informal consultations would be set up to help to prevent future misunderstandings. He underlined the growing spirit of collaboration in evidence during the previous year.

256. The Executive Board requested the Administrator to submit, at its second regular session 1997, a revised conference room paper on follow-up to Economic and Social Council resolution 95/56, taking into consideration comments made during the debate at the present session.

Cyprus country office

257. The Executive Board had before it a note on the Cyprus country office (DP/1997/5).

258. The representative of Cyprus noted the status of his country as a net contributor country (NCC) and the intent of UNDP to close the UNDP office in Cyprus in March 1997. He expressed gratitude to UNDP, the Administrator, the Assistant Administrator and Director of the Regional Bureau for Europe and the Commonwealth of Independent States, and the resident representatives who had served in Cyprus for their valuable contribution to the work of UNDP in cooperation with the Government of Cyprus. He hoped that under its new status Cyprus would be a contributor to UNDP.

259. The Executive Board took note of the information regarding the closure of the country office in Cyprus, as contained in document DP/1997/5.

Programme delivery

260. At the request of delegations during the present session, the Associate Administrator briefed the Executive Board on the status of programme delivery. He noted that 1997 was the first year of the successor programming period, and therefore the critical transitionary year during which UNDP was expected to implement fully the new arrangements, as approved by the Board in decision 95/23. Not only did UNDP need to deliver high quality programmes but it should deliver them in a timely manner within the prescribed resource package.

261. In October 1995, the Administrator had expressed his alarm at the build-up in the level of liquid core resources, and the apparent slowdown of approved programmes and planned pipeline in place for 1996 and future years. An increase in programming momentum was called for in order to reduce the build-up of liquid core resources, to ensure the full delivery of fifth cycle funds, and to establish the foundation upon which the resource base approved in Executive Board decision 95/23, covering the new programming period, 1997-1999, would be delivered. A conference room paper (DP/1996/CRP.19) on the subject had been made available to the third regular session 1996. A number of measures had been taken at that time to improve the future outlook of the programme. The Administrator directly communicated to all resident representatives his deep concern about losing programming momentum and the corresponding drop in delivery inherent therein. At the request of the Administrator, he had initiated a series of special reviews with the regional bureaux to develop comprehensive plans of action outlining region-specific strategies for dealing with the issues, and to analyse individual country programming levels, with particular emphasis on underprogrammed countries. Sixteen large, underprogrammed countries had been subsequently identified. He had spent six weeks in one of those countries, Bangladesh, as Resident Representative, a.i., in order to gain a better understanding of the problems, and ways of overcoming them. He described to the Board several of his experiences which related to programme delivery in Bangladesh.

262. As a result of a number of internal analyses and of his own professional experience, it became rapidly apparent that the continuing programming and delivery slowdown was the direct result of a combination of complex and interrelated factors reflecting UNDP efforts to reposition itself as a more responsive and effective organization. Chief among those factors were the significant increase in national execution/implementation, the implementation of the programme approach, and the refocusing of UNDP programming priorities and

structure. As UNDP left its traditional programming arrangements, the resulting programme reorientations and adaptations to new guidelines had created slowdowns in the normal rates for programme build-up and delivery.

263. The organization had focused its priorities on strengthening operational policies and procedures, and improving the current programme delivery situation, in parallel with the current deliberations and activities connected with the internal change process of UNDP. In October 1996, he had established the Special Task Force on Programming and Delivery for the purpose of monitoring programme approvals and delivery in country offices based on individual programme country 1997-1999 expenditure targets. Those targets had been arrived at through a consultative process that included resident representatives, regional bureaux, and the Division for Resources Planning and Coordination. The terms of reference for the Special Task Force were distributed to the Executive Board. The Administrator had also committed $2 million from his contingency reserve for funding a special support project whose sole purpose was to have direct and immediate impact on increasing 1997-1999 programme quality, commitments and delivery, with special emphasis on 1997 delivery.

264. The Executive Committee of UNDP was regularly apprised of the ongoing problems and issues impacting programme delivery. The situation was serious. The 1997 budget approval target was $878 million. At the present time, UNDP had about $260 million in approvals. Thus, if UNDP assumed that significant delivery in 1997 would take place only against budgets approved prior to July 1997, the monthly approval rate during the next six months should approximate $100 million.

265. At the Executive Committee meeting held the preceding week, the Administrator declared programme delivery as the number one priority for UNDP in 1997. He then highlighted the directives the Administrator had put into immediate effect: (a) all programme staff would devote maximum attention to boosting approval and delivery rates to meet the targets that were collectively set; (b) restrictions on all travel by the Directors of the regional bureaux and resident representatives were in effect for the following six months; (c) the Executive Committee would continue to monitor delivery performance on a regular basis; (d) the Special Task Force on Programming and Delivery, which met every two weeks under his chairmanship, was designated as the primary instrument for generating the necessary impetus for accelerating approvals and implementation rates; (e) issuance of maximum delegation of approval authority to country offices, which in turn would be held fully accountable for delivery performance; (f) the completion of all programme manuals and guidelines supporting the full implementation of the successor programming arrangements, including revised national execution and programme approach manuals, and guidelines for working with NGOs; (g) transmission of a "Direct Line" from the Administrator to all resident representatives on the issue of approvals and delivery, as well as a special letter from him to resident representatives in designated "priority countries", defining clearly what was expected of them and the support to be provided by headquarters; (h) insurance that TRAC lines 1.1.1 and 1.1.2 were jointly programmed in line with existing criteria; (i) preparation of a short list of countries in each region based upon the size of their notional TRACs for immediate and concerted attention. The list would include countries that could realistically make a critical difference to region-wide performance; and (j) the

creation of delivery action teams by regional bureaux, to be composed of some of the best and most operational staff. The teams would be sent to priority countries to assist resident representatives in critically reviewing and tightening delivery projection, accelerating the approval of projects, and developing programme-specific, innovative solutions for boosting actual delivery in 1997. The $2 million Delivery Support Facility would provide the resources for fielding those teams.

266. The Associate Administrator assured the Executive Board that UNDP fully understood the gravity of the present programme delivery situation, particularly in the current environment of change. The organization was directing its full energy to ensuring that approvals, especially for 1997, reached acceptable levels over the following six to eight months in order to attain satisfactory delivery levels. The results of UNDP efforts and the potential impact they would have on 1997 and 1998 delivery levels would be known by mid-year. He proposed that a comprehensive report on the 1997-1999 programme delivery situation be submitted for the consideration of the third regular session 1997.

267. The President requested information on the relationship between the Special Task Force on Programming and Delivery and the Task Force on National Execution. The Associate Administrator stated that the two efforts differed in that the Task Force on National Execution was aimed at finalizing guidelines for the manual on national execution, which would be reviewed by the Programme Management Oversight Committee. Both task forces would report eventually to the Executive Committee, the highest policy-making committee in UNDP.

268. Several delegations thanked the Associate Administrator for his excellent account, in particular with reference to his personal experience in Bangladesh. Many speakers noted the reasons for the difficulties in the delivery processes and complimented UNDP on the range of interventions to be utilized to increase delivery. There was great interest in the issue in the capitals and particularly among the treasury and finance ministries owing to the possible effect of the situation on future funding of UNDP. The work of the Special Task Force was very reassuring to delegations. One delegation sought clarification on the expenditure target for 1997. Information was also sought on whether the special measures, including the plan for deputy resident representatives to work outside of their normal assignments, would interfere with normal planning procedures and on the involvement of Governments in the process. One representative expressed concern that delivery might not be so easy to implement, in particular at the time of the change process in UNDP. The delegation requested information on the delivery rates in 1995 and 1996. Internal bureaucracy in UNDP needed to be more streamlined to create a better organizational image.

269. The Associate Administrator informed the Executive Board that the expenditure target for 1997 was $635 million. Individual targets had been worked out in conjunction with the regional bureaux, so that they would be as realistic as possible. The performance of resident representatives would be assessed on the realization of targets worked out for 1997. He noted that the figure for 1996 was not yet available. The delivery rate in 1992 was $696 million; for 1993, $573 million; for 1994, $460 million; and for 1995 $416 million. The decision to dispatch delivery action teams was a short-term

emergency measure for countries that might not have sufficient staff to work on programme delivery. The programming process would be coordinated with the Government.

97/6. Overview of decisions adopted by the Executive Board at its first regular session 1997

The Executive Board

Recalls that during the first regular session 1997 it:

Item 1: ORGANIZATIONAL MATTERS

Elected the following Bureau for 1997:

President	Mr. Hans Lundborg (Sweden)
Vice-President	Mr. Bruce Lutangu Namakando (Zambia)
Vice-President	Mr. Mochamed Slamet Hidayat (Indonesia)
Vice-President	Mr. Sorin Mihail Tanasescu (Romania)
Vice-President	Ambassador John William Ashe (Antigua and Barbuda)

Approved the agenda and work plan for its first regular session 1997 (DP/1997/L.1) as orally amended;

Approved the report of the third regular session 1996 (DP/1996/39);

Took note of the progress report on the work of the ad hoc working group on rules of procedure (DP/1997/CRP.1);

Took note of the oral report by the Secretary of the Board on the implementation of decision 96/45 on documentation;

Approved the annual work plan 1997 for UNDP/UNFPA Executive Board as orally amended and annexed to the present decision;

Agreed to the following schedule of future sessions of the Executive Board in 1997 subject to the approval of the Committee on Conferences:

Second regular session 1997: 10-14 March 1997

Annual session 1997: 12-23 May 1997 (New York)

Third regular session 1997: 15-19 September 1997

Agreed to the following tentative schedule of future sessions of the Executive Board in 1998:

First regular session 1998: 19-23 January 1998

Second regular session 1998: 20-24 April 1998

Annual session 1998 (Geneva): 25 May-5 June 1998

Third regular session 1998: 7-11 September 1998

Agreed to the subjects to be discussed at the second regular session 1997 of the Board, as listed in table 2 of the annex;

UNFPA SEGMENT

ITEM 2: UNFPA: COUNTRY PROGRAMMES AND RELATED MATTERS

Approved the assistance to the Government of Côte d'Ivoire (DP/FPA/CP/169);

Approved the assistance to the Government of Djibouti (DP/FPA/CP/167);

Approved the assistance to the Government of Kenya (DP/FPA/CP/168);

Approved the assistance to the Government of Malawi (DP/FPA/CP/162);

Approved the assistance to the Government of Mexico (DP/FPA/CP/161);

Approved the assistance to the Government of Mongolia (DP/FPA/CP/170);

Approved the assistance to the Government of Morocco (DP/FPA/CP/166);

Approved the assistance to the Government of Nepal (DP/FPA/CP/165);

Approved the assistance to the Government of the United Republic of Tanzania (DP/FPA/CP/164);

Approved the assistance to the Government of Zambia (DP/FPA/CP/163);

Approved the request for extension of, and additional resources for, the UNFPA country programme for Bangladesh (DP/FPA/1997/2);

Approved the request for extension of, and additional resources for, the UNFPA country programme for Nicaragua (DP/FPA/1997/1);

Approved the request for extension of, and additional resources for, the UNFPA country programme for the South Pacific (DP/FPA/1997/3);

Agreed to consider UNFPA country programmes at the second regular session 1997, on a no-objection basis, for that session only, without pre-judging the outcome of the discussion on decision 96/13 at the annual session 1997;

ITEM 3: UNFPA: FINANCIAL, BUDGETARY AND ADMINISTRATIVE MATTERS

Adopted decision 97/2 of 16 January 1997 on UNFPA audit reports;

ITEM 4: UNFPA: COORDINATION IN HEALTH POLICY AND PROGRAMMES

Adopted decision 97/1 of 16 January 1997 on coordination in health policy and programming, follow-up to Executive Board decision 96/38;

UNDP/UNFPA SEGMENT

ITEM 5: HARMONIZATION OF PRESENTATION OF BUDGETS

Approved the proposed format for the biennial support budget of UNDP and UNFPA as contained in document DP/1997/2;

UNDP SEGMENT

ITEM 6: COUNTRY COOPERATION FRAMEWORKS AND RELATED MATTERS

I

Approved the following country cooperation frameworks:

First country cooperation framework for Belize (DP/CCF/BEL/1);

First country cooperation framework for the Czech Republic (DP/CCF/CZE/1);

First country cooperation framework for Hungary (DP/CCF/HUN/1);

First country cooperation framework for Kazakstan (DP/CCF/KAZ/1);

First country cooperation framework for Kyrgystan (DP/CCF/KYR/1);

First country cooperation framework for the Republic of Moldova (DP/CCF/MOL/1);

First country cooperation framework for the Slovak Republic (DP/CCF/SLO/1);

II

Approved the regional cooperation framework for Latin America and the Caribbean (DP/RCF/RLA/1);

III

Adopted decision 97/5 of 17 January 1997 on the first global cooperation framework (DP/GCF/1);

IV

Took note of the extension of the following country programmes:

Extension of the sixth country programme for Algeria (DP/CP/ALG/6/EXTENSION I)

Extension of the fifth country programme for Bahrain (DP/CP/BAH/5/EXTENSION I);

Extension of the sixth country programme for Jordan (DP/CP/JOR/6/EXTENSION I);

V

Took note of the note of the Administrator on UNDP assistance to Myanmar (DP/1997/4);

ITEM 7: UNDP: FINANCIAL, BUDGETARY AND ADMINISTRATIVE MATTERS

Adopted decision 97/3 of 16 January 1997 on UNDP audit reports;

Took note of the report of the Administrator on the implementation of decision 96/40 on management, accountability and reserve for field accommodation (DP/1997/CRP.3) with the comments made thereon;

Took note of the additional information on cost segments at UNDP headquarters (DP/1997/CRP.4);

ITEM 8: UNITED NATIONS DEVELOPMENT FUND FOR WOMEN

Adopted decision 97/4 of 17 January 1997 on the United Nations Development Fund for Women;

ITEM 9: OTHER MATTERS

Requested the Administrator to submit, at its second regular session 1997, a revised conference room paper on follow-up to the Economic and Social Council resolution 95/56, taking into consideration comments made during its debate at the first regular session 1997.

Took note of the oral progress report by the Associate Administrator on the implementation of the UNDP accountability framework.

Took note of the closure of the Cyprus country office.

17 January 1997

Annex

UNDP/UNFPA EXECUTIVE BOARD: WORK PLAN 1997

1. In its decision 96/25, the Executive Board decided, inter alia, to introduce an annual work plan and, in paragraph 5 of the same decision, requested that UNDP and UNFPA prepare, for the third regular session "an outline of issues that could be considered by the Board in 1997, based on previous deliberations of the Board and the organizational priorities and objectives set for 1997". Pursuant to that request, the present document proposes a tentative agenda for each session of the Executive Board in 1997, prepared on the basis of the outlines of UNDP and UNFPA issues presented to the Board at its third regular session 1996 (see DP/1996/CRP.13)

and taking into account the comments made by the Board at that session.

2. As discussed at the third regular session 1996, the priority issues for UNDP in 1997 are:

(a) Building poverty eradication into UNDP policy and programming as the top priority;

(b) Management of change;

(c) Resource mobilization;

(d) Implementation of the new programming arrangements;

(e) Supporting the resident coordinator system;

(f) Financial and managerial oversight and planning.

3. Priorities (a), (b), (c) and (e) will be addressed at the annual session of the Executive Board, in the context of the annual report of the Administrator.

4. Regarding the implementation of the new programming arrangements, it is proposed that country cooperation frameworks be taken up by the Executive Board as soon as they are ready for submission, including at the annual session of the Board, in order not to delay their implementation.

5. In addition, it is proposed that a thematic discussion on the national execution modality be taken up at the second regular session of the Executive Board.

6. Various aspects of financial and managerial oversight and planning, i.e., priority (f), will be dealt with at each session.

7. The tentative agendas proposed for the UNFPA segments translate the UNFPA priority issues agreed upon at the third regular session 1996 into specific agenda items. These issues were presented in the UNFPA outline of priority issues for 1997 (see DP/1996/CRP.13) under five priority themes:

(a) Programme priorities;

(b) Programme implementation;

(c) Programme support;

(d) Resources;

(e) Financial, budgetary and administrative matters, including audit.

8. Country programmes and related matters figure significantly in the proposals for the UNFPA segments of the agendas, since the Fund will present an unprecedented number of country programmes for approval in 1997. UNFPA proposes to take up most of the other priority issues presented under themes (a), (b), (c) and (d) during the annual session, since many are to be reported on in the context of the report of the Executive Director for 1996 and the UNFPA work plan for 1998-2001.

9. UNFPA financial, budgetary and administrative matters are proposed for the third regular session in September, as are the issues concerning the monitoring and implementation of technical support services arrangements and the evaluation of UNFPA training activities.

10. Finally, as suggested at the third regular session 1996, the reports of the Administrator and the Executive Director to the Economic and Social Council, the format of which will be agreed jointly among the funds and programmes, will include subjects derived from General Assembly resolution 50/120 for consideration by the Council in 1997, such as capacity-building, country and regional-level coordination, and resources.

EXECUTIVE BOARD OF UNDP/UNFPA TENTATIVE AGENDA FOR 1997

Table 1. First regular session 1997 (13-17 January 1997)

(5 working days)

Item No.	Nature of report	Action/ Information	Time Allotted	Item and subject
1				ORGANIZATIONAL MATTERS
	Official (DP/1997/L.1)	A		Provisional agenda, annotations, list of documents
	Official	A		Report on the third regular session 1996
	Official	I	1/2 day	Decisions adopted by the Executive Board in 1996
	CRP	I		Matters relating to the rules of procedure, documentation and functioning of the Executive Board
	CRP	A		Annual work plan 1997 for UNDP/UNFPA Executive Board
				UNFPA SEGMENT
2				COUNTRY PROGRAMMES AND RELATED MATTERS
	Official	A	1 day	Country programmes
3				FINANCIAL, BUDGETARY AND ADMINISTRATIVE MATTERS
	Official	I	1/2 day	Audit reports
4	Official	A	1/2 day	COORDINATION IN HEALTH POLICY AND PROGRAMMING
				UNDP/UNFPA SEGMENT
5				HARMONIZATION OF PRESENTATION OF BUDGETS
	Official	A	1/2 day	Harmonization of presentation of budgets and accounts

Item No.	Nature of report	Action/ Information	Time Allotted	Item and subject
				UNDP SEGMENT
6				COUNTRY COOPERATION FRAMEWORKS AND RELATED MATTERS
	Official	A	1/2 day	Country cooperation frameworks and global/regional cooperation frameworks
7				FINANCIAL, BUDGETARY AND ADMINISTRATIVE MATTERS
	Official	I		Audit reports
	CRP	I		Implementation of decision 96/40 on management, accountability and reserve for field accommodation
	CRP	I	1/2 day	Additional information on cost segments at UNDP headquarters
	Oral	I		Report on the accountability system of UNDP
8				UNITED NATIONS DEVELOPMENT FUND FOR WOMEN
	CRP	I	1/2 day	Follow-up to decision 96/43
9				OTHER MATTERS
	CRP	I	1/4 day	Follow-up to Economic and Social Council resolution 95/56

Abbreviations: A = action; CRP = conference room paper; and I = information.

Table 2. Second regular session 1997 (10-14 March 1997)

(5 working days)

Item No.	Nature of report	Action/ Information	Time Allotted	Item and subject
1				ORGANIZATIONAL MATTERS
	Official (DP/1997/L.2)	A		Provisional agenda, annotations, list of documents
	Official	A		Report on the first regular session 1997
				UNDP SEGMENT
2			1½ days	COUNTRY COOPERATION FRAMEWORKS AND RELATED MATTERS
	Official	A		Country cooperation frameworks and regional cooperation frameworks
	CRP	A		Format and timing for review of the new programming arrangements (96/7)
	CRP	I	1/2 day	National execution
3				UNITED NATIONS CAPITAL DEVELOPMENT FUND
	Official	A	1/2 day	United Nations Capital Development Fund (including strategy and business plans)
4				FINANCIAL, BUDGETARY AND ADMINISTRATIVE MATTERS
	CRP	A	1/2 day	Outline of overall strategy for the budget for the biennium 1998-1999 (96/41, para. 4)
	Oral	I		Report on the accountability system of UNDP
				UNFPA SEGMENT
6	Official	A	2 days	COUNTRY PROGRAMMES AND RELATED MATTERS
7				OTHER MATTERS including:
				- Report on Reserve for field accommodation
				- Revised report on follow-up to ECOSOC resolution 95/56

Abbreviations: A = action; CRP = conference room paper; and I = information.

Note: An informal briefing on the special initiative for Africa will be held during the session.

Table 3. Annual session 1997 (12-23 May 1997)
(10 working days)

Item No.	Nature of report	Action/ Information	Time Allotted	Item and subject
1				ORGANIZATIONAL MATTERS
	Official (DP/1997/L.3)	A		Provisional agenda, annotations, list of documents/work plan
	Official	A		Report on the second regular session 1997
	Official	A		Rules of procedure: report of ad hoc open-ended working group
				UNFPA SEGMENT
2	Official		1½ days	REPORT OF THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR FOR 1996 - Core programme areas - Evaluation - Implementation of ICPD Programme of Action - Global contraceptive commodity programme - Resources
3	Official	A	1/2 day	INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION STRATEGY
4	Official	A	1/2 day	WORK PLAN AND REQUEST FOR EXPENDITURE AUTHORITY, 1998-2001
5	Official	I	1/2 day	STATUS OF FINANCIAL IMPLEMENTATION OF UNFPA COUNTRY PROGRAMMES
6	Official	A	1 day	COUNTRY PROGRAMMES AND RELATED MATTERS
				UNDP/UNFPA SEGMENT
7				REPORTS TO THE ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL COUNCIL
	Official	I	1/2 day	Report to the Economic and Social Council: report of the Administrator Report to the Economic and Social Council: report of the Executive Director
				UNDP SEGMENT
8				ANNUAL REPORT OF THE ADMINISTRATOR
	Official + CRPs[a]	A		Introduction by the Administrator
	Official	A		Main programme record, including reporting on special funds
				Assistance to the Palestinian people
				NADAF and the Special Initiative for Africa
	Official	I	2½ days[b]	Evaluation, including impact measurement
				Resources
	Official	I		Internal oversight, accountability and reports of the Joint Inspection Unit

/...

Item No.	Nature of report	Action/ Information	Time Allotted	Item and subject
				Change management
	Official	I		Statistical annex
	Official	I		Subcontracts awarded and major equipment ordered
9				COUNTRY COOPERATION FRAMEWORKS AND RELATED MATTERS
	Official	A	1/2 day	Country cooperation frameworks and regional cooperation frameworks
10				COMMUNICATION AND INFORMATION PROGRAMME
	Official	I	1/2 day	UNDP information and publication policy (96/22)
11				UNITED NATIONS DEVELOPMENT FUND FOR WOMEN
	Official	A	1/2 day	United Nations Development Fund for Women (95/18)
12				FINANCIAL, BUDGETARY AND ADMINISTRATIVE MATTERS
	Official	I	1 day	Report on the accountability system of UNDP
13				UNITED NATIONS OFFICE FOR PROJECT SERVICES
	Official	A		Report on the United Nations Office for Project Services (96/33)
14			1/2 day	OTHER MATTERS

Abbreviations: A = action; CRP = conference room paper; I = information; and ICPD = International Conference on Population and Development.

[a] Documentation will also be submitted on poverty eradication.

[b] Including a special panel discussion on poverty eradication.

Table 4. Third regular session 1997 (15-23 September 1997)

(5 working days)

Item No.	Nature of report	Action/ Information	Time Allotted	Item and subject
1				ORGANIZATIONAL MATTERS
	Official (DP/1997/L.4)	A		Provisional agenda, annotations, list of documents
	Official	A	1/2 day	Report on the annual session 1997
	CRP	I		Outline for Executive Board work plan 1998
				UNDP SEGMENT
2				FINANCIAL, BUDGETARY AND ADMINISTRATIVE MATTERS
	Official	A		Budget estimates for the biennium 1998-1999 (96/41, para. 4)
	Official	A	1½ days	Revised budget estimates for the biennium 1996-1997
	Official	I		Annual review of the financial situation 1996
	Official	I		Activities of Inter-Agency Procurement Services Office
3				UNOPS: FINANCIAL, BUDGETARY AND ADMINISTRATIVE MATTERS
	Official	A		Budget estimates for the biennium 1998-1999
	Official	A	1/2 day	Revised budget estimates for the biennium 1996-1997
	Official	I		Audit reports
4				COUNTRY COOPERATION FRAMEWORKS AND RELATED MATTERS
	Official	A	1/2 day	Country cooperation frameworks and regional cooperation frameworks
				UNFPA SEGMENT
6				FINANCIAL, BUDGETARY AND ADMINISTRATIVE MATTERS
	Official	A		Biennial budget estimates
	Official	A		Annual financial review, 1996
	Official	I	1½ days	Implementation and monitoring of technical support services arrangements
	Official	I		Evaluation of UNFPA training activities

Item No.	Nature of report	Action/ Information	Time Allotted	Item and subject
7	Official	A	1/2 day	COUNTRY PROGRAMMES AND RELATED MATTERS
8				OTHER MATTERS

Abbreviations: A = action; CRP = conference room paper; I = information; and UNOPS = United Nations Office for Project Services.

Note: Review of field visits will be taken up in informal consultations during the session.